

History of Kingship in Ceylon up to
the fourth century A.D.

Tilak Hettiarachchy

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Abbreviations

AC.	Ancient Ceylon.
AIC.	Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon.
ASC.	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon.
ASCAR.	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Reports.
ASC.SPR.	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Seventh Progress Report.
CALR.	The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register.
CCM.	Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times.
CHJ.	The Ceylon Historical Journal.
CJHSS.	Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies.
CJSG.	Ceylon Journal of Science (Section.G)
Cv.	Cūlavamsa.
Dv.	Dīpavamsa.
EHBC.	Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon.
Enc.Rel.Eth.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
EZ.	Epigraphia Zeylanica.
IACI.	Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions.
JGIS.	The Journal of the Greater India Society.
JCBRAS,	
JRAS.CB.	Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JRAS.GB & Ir.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Great Britain and Ireland.
Manu.	Mānava Dharmasāstra
Mv.	Mahāvamsa.
Nks.	Nikāya Sangrahaya.
NS.	New Series.

PTS.	Pali Text Society.
Rsv.	Rasavāhini.
SBE.	Sacred Books of the East.
Smp.	Samantapāsādikā.
SSC.	Siamese State Ceremonies.
Ssvp.	Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa.
Svp.	Sīhalavatthuppakaraṇa.
UCR.	University of Ceylon Review.
UHC.	University of Ceylon History of Ceylon.

Abstract

The present study is an examination of the institution of kingship in Ceylon from about the 3rd century B.C. to the 4th century A.D. Chapter I shows that kingship originated out of local leadership in the early north Indian colonies, but that Indian ideas exerted a great deal of influence on its subsequent development. The second chapter discusses the various titles given to the early rulers and points out their significance in the evolution of local leadership into full-fledged kingship. The local nobility and its formation is discussed in relation to the royalty in chapter III. The bureaucracy of officers who served the king is the subject of chapter IV. The relationship between the king and the Sangha is the theme of chapter V, particular attention being paid in this chapter to the contribution of the Sangha to the development of the monarchy. Chapter VI is an attempt to trace the geographical expansion of royal power and authority over the whole Island. It also includes an examination of the factors which facilitated the growth of royal power. Lastly, chapter VII discusses the powers exercised by the king and the limitations to which he was subject.

Introduction

Kingship is one of the oldest institutions in Ceylon with a history which goes back to the 3rd and 4th centuries before the Christian era. It is, along with caste and family, the only institution which survived from the remote past to the 19th century. But, strangely enough, a study of its history has not been attempted apart from a few papers on some aspects which have appeared in journals. The present study is intended to fill this need.

Ceylon produced neither a Kautilya nor a Manu. Therefore our attempt involves linking together unconnected material to obtain a coherent picture. In this respect one must fall back again and again upon parallel institutions in contemporary India to explain the Ceylonese institutions. Literary sources attribute the beginning of kingship in Ceylon to the very first Indian colonies in the Island. Vijaya, the first king and the eponymous hero of the Sinhalese people, landed on the Island of Laṃkā on the day when the Buddha attained parinirvāṇa, which, according to the tradition maintained in Ceylon, fell in 543 B.C. But the reliable history of the Island begins with Devānaṃpiya Tissa (250-210 B.C.) whose reign witnessed the official introduction of Buddhism into the Island. The earliest Brahmi inscriptions in Ceylon also appear at about the same time and therefore it is reasonable to begin our study with Devānaṃpiya Tissa rather than with Vijaya.

The reign of Mahāsena (274-301 A.D) is taken as the terminus ad quem of this study for various reasons: first, Mahāsena's reign marks the end of the period of history related in the Mahāvamsa. Though the Cūlavamsa picks up the narrative at the point where the Mahāvamsa leaves it, it was written some six centuries later; because of this and also because the Cūlavamsa differs considerably from its predecessor in its ideological background, any study of kingship taking us beyond the reign of Mahāsena runs the risk of attributing ideas of a later date to the earlier period. Second, the reign of Mahāsena saw the catastrophic end of the struggle between political and religious institutions which caused a considerable change in certain aspects of kingship. Third, from the reign of Mahāsena until the 7th and 8th centuries, inscriptions, particularly those relevant to kingship, occur but seldom, and this makes the study of this era, unlike that of the early period, totally dependent on literary sources, especially on the Cūlavamsa. Fourth, even the available evidence shows that within a few centuries after Mahāsena kingship changed quite considerably and, therefore, needs detailed attention which can be attempted only in a separate study.

The period selected for the present study could be regarded as the formative period of kingship in Ceylon and a proper understanding of it would promote further research. Hence this early period was selected with the intention of dealing with some of the basic problems involved in a study of kingship.

The sources upon which the present study is based can be grouped under two primary headings, literary and epigraphic. Among the literary sources the Pali chronicles figure first and their importance cannot be minimised in reconstructing the history of ancient Ceylon. Of the chronicles the Mahāvamsa or the 'Great Chronicle' is foremost. Although the Mahāvamsa was written as late as the 6th century A.D., it is based on older tradition, i.e., the Sīhala Atthakathā Mahāvamsa which was a special branch of atthakathās and dealt with the religious and political history of the Island. The commentary on the Mahāvamsa, the Vamsatthappakāsinī or the Mahāvamsa Tīkā as it is sometimes called, ranks second only to the Mahāvamsa for the present study. Although the Vamsatthappakāsinī is dated between the 8th and 10th centuries, it furnishes a mine of additional details which do not occur in the Mahāvamsa and which the commentator derived from sources on which the Mahāvamsa itself was based. However a certain amount of caution is needed in using the Vamsatthappakāsinī, for it contains new material which seems to have been a later accretion to the main corpus of historical tradition. After this comes the Dīpavamsa, the first of the chronicles to be written in Ceylon but overshadowed in importance by the more elegant although later work, the Mahāvamsa.

The two works, the Sahassavatthupparāṇa and the Sīhalavatthupparāṇa dated somewhere between the 8th and 10th centuries, although not chronicles contain valuable information relevant to our study, and most of the events recorded in these two works fall within our period. Moreover, since the stories in these works are by and large related to Rohana, it is possible that

they represent traditions developed in Rohana and as such they are valuable because all the other literary sources remain within the limits of the Mahavihara tradition.

Apart from these, the Mahābodhivaṃsa which deals with the history of the Bodhi tree, the Rasavāhinī which contains mostly legendary material about Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and his warriors, and the Sinhalese work the Dhātuvāṃsa which deals with the history of the frontal bone of the Buddha could be mentioned. Of these the Rasavāhinī is not very reliable because of its recent date.

The other important branch of literary sources is Pali commentaries. Although they were composed after the 5th century A.D., it is now generally accepted that these were merely rearrangements and translations of the Sinhalese commentaries which took form about the 2nd century A.D. Most of the Pali commentaries were composed by the great commentator Buddhaghosa who visited the Island in the 5th century A.D. Of the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, the Samantapāsādikā (commentary on the Vinaya Piṭaka), the Sumangalavilāsinī (commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya), the Papañcasūdanī (commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya), the Manorathapūranī (commentary on the Anguttara Nikāya), and the Sammohavinodanī (commentary on the Vibhanga) furnish particularly valuable data about kingship. Other works of Buddhaghosa and those of commentators like Dhammapāla also shed occasional light on the subject.

The information that can be gleaned from the Pali commentaries is twofold. First, there are direct references to incidents that took place in Ceylon and such evidence can be accepted as

genuine, for the aṭṭhakathācariyas (the Elders who took care of the commentaries once they were brought into the Island by Mahinda and other theras) or later commentators like Buddhaghosa were generally free from sectarian prejudices, since they had no intention of glorifying or minimising the importance of persons, events and institutions. Second, the commentaries, when describing obscure points of doctrine or defining words in the canon, often give hypothetical examples. These examples, it would seem, fall into three different layers; first, the commentators might merely have quoted what was in the original Sinhalese commentaries based on texts brought from India; second, some examples might have been invented by the aṭṭhakathācariyas; and finally, some other examples might have been invented by commentators like Buddhaghosa himself. The two latter kinds of examples help us to study conditions in Ceylon, for the aṭṭhakathācariyas and later commentators like Buddhaghosa would certainly have been influenced by contemporary ideas when they gave hypothetical examples. However, such information needs careful scrutiny before being used as evidence, and each instance must be assessed separately and compared with the relevant passage in the canonical text which it tries to explain, for the aṭṭhakathācariyas and later commentators might have been equally influenced by the Indian canonical literature in making hypothetical examples.

The other main category of our sources is the epigraphic evidence. It is unfortunate that most of the inscriptions of the early period still await publication, thus limiting our study to published inscriptions. Even most of the inscriptions which are

'published' are not really useful, for in most cases the inscription is only registered, stating barely what it contains.

In this connexion I am indebted to the work done by Mr. C.W. Nicholas who made a collection of Brahmi inscriptions both 'published' and unpublished. This work, which is in three volumes, is hand written and contains the original text of about a thousand Brahmi inscriptions with transcript and in most cases with translation. These are eye copies made by Nicholas and were compared with estampages in the Archaeological Department of Ceylon. This collection has the added advantage that some inaccurate readings of published inscriptions are corrected therein.* A considerable number of inscriptions in this collection have been published in papers by Nicholas.

Apart from the inscriptions appearing in the Epigraphia Zeylanica, other Brahmi inscriptions have been published in the Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon for 1892 (the Report on the Kegalle District), 1896 (the Seventh Progress Report), 1911-12, 1933 and 1934; Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon by Muller; Ancient Ceylon by Parker; the Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register volume III; the Ceylon Journal of Science (section G) volumes I and II; the Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (New Series) volumes II and V; and the University of Ceylon Review volumes VII and VIII. Some other Reports of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon also register

* I am grateful to Professor Laksman S. Perera of the Colombo University of Ceylon, for drawing my attention to this collection. This manuscript, along with some books which Mr. Nicholas bequeathed to the University of Ceylon, is at the University Library at Peradeniya.

inscriptions but the text of the inscriptions or even their full contents are very rarely given in these. The readings and translations of most of the inscriptions in the works published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are inaccurate; some of these are corrected in later works.

The importance of inscriptions for our study cannot be exaggerated; compared with literary sources they have the advantage of recording contemporary and comparatively unbiased evidence. That many of the inscriptions relevant to our study are unavailable is one of the disadvantages that we have to bear in mind, but this may not materially affect the present study since the inscriptions that have been consulted coming from all parts of the Island and spread more or less equally throughout the whole period in proportion to their occurrence, could be regarded as a fair representation of the whole. The fact that some of the inscriptions cannot be attributed definitely to a particular king as well as the uncertainty of the exact meaning of some of the terms used in these inscriptions are two other distressing elements.

It will be seen that the literary sources on which this study of early kingship in Ceylon is based were all written or at least put into their final form after the 4th century of the Christian era. The more important among them, the Mahāvamsa for example, were written after the 5th century or even later. The literary

sources, therefore were the product of an age when kingship had gone through at least seven centuries of development. The main defect of these sources derives from this fact: their authors or compilers tended to regard the institution of monarchy that they found in their own day as one which had been there in Ceylon right from the beginning.

Epigraphical evidence is a salutary corrective to information supplied in the chronicles. Inscriptions from the third century before the Christian era refer to kings, and they show that the earlier rulers in Ceylon had nothing like the charisma or the powers of later kings; nor are they surrounded by some institutions which were to become an integral part of kingship later. The inscriptions, in other words, show that monarchy in Ceylon was humble in origin, but that in course of time, it evolved, adding to its powers and prestige in the process. Epigraphical and literary evidence are, therefore complementary for our study.

CHAPTER I

Kingship, its Origin and Early Developments

The origin of kingship in Ceylon seems to have been closely connected with the colonisation of the Island by immigrants from northern India. The chronicles which give a consecutive history of the Island from the advent of these immigrants lead us to believe that the institution of kingship was brought from the mainland full-fledged. The Dīpavaṃsa, the earlier of the two main chronicles, mentions the coming of the princes (narindāgamaṇaṃ) as one among the various subjects that are to be dealt with.¹ The Vaṃsatthappakāsinī also includes the arrival of the princes as one of the subjects that the Mahāvaṃsa is to encompass.²

According to these chronicles, the Island was populated for the first time by settlers from north India, headed by a Kṣatriya prince named Vijaya. This prince, so the story goes in the Mahāvaṃsa, met a yakkhinī with whose aid he conquered the whole multitude of yakkhas who inhabited the Island.³ The followers of Vijaya requested him to be consecrated as the king of Ceylon but the prince would not consent unless a Kṣatriya maiden were consecrated with him.⁴ The followers of Vijaya surmounted this difficulty by procuring a princess from the king of Madura. The arrival of the princess from Madura and the consecration of Vijaya as the king of Ceylon thus established monarchy in the Island.⁵

1. Dv.1.1

2. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. p.36, L.3

3. Mv.6.34-
7.1-39

4. Mv.7.46-47

5. Mv.7.48-71

If this story could be accepted at its face value the origin of kingship in Ceylon would be quite plain and there would be little need for discussion. But the story is not acceptable, for two obvious reasons. On the one hand, the chronicles which report the story are not contemporary documents; even the earliest among them was written some eight hundred years after the incidents related.¹ Therefore much reliance must not be placed on them even though the chronicles are based on an older tradition.² Moreover, the titles given to the ancient Sinhalese kings in their epigraphical records are of a much more humble type than one would expect from the story of Vijaya. For these reasons the origin and the evolution of kingship in ancient Ceylon should also be analysed in the light of these inscriptions.

The earliest king to whom an inscription can be attributed without any uncertainty is Uttiya, the immediate successor of Devānampiya Tissa.³ These inscriptions give three distinct titles to this king, gamani, maharaja and devanapiya.⁴ We are concerned here only with the first of these for the reasons given below.

Gamani is found in the chronicles as an integral part of the names of a few kings belonging to this early period. Thus Dutthagāmanī, Vatthagāmanī, Āmaṇḍagāmanī and Gajabāhukagāmanī, all have gāmanī suffixed to their names. But the inscriptions show, in the first place, that gamani was not a personal name but a title

1. Malalasekara, The Pali Literature of Ceylon, p.131

2. UCR.IV.pp.18 ff

3. There are some inscriptions tentatively attributed to Devānampiya Tissa, See, EZ.V.pp.231-232

4. ASCAR.1933. J 14 (53); EZ.V.p.217 (34), p.220 (46,47), p.231

and, secondly, that it was taken by most of the kings before Vasabha and by one after him. Thus Devānampiya Tissa,¹ Uttiya,² Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya,³ Saddhā Tissa,⁴ Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya,⁵ Mahācūlika Mahātissa,⁶ Kuṭakanna Tissa,⁷ Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya,⁸ and Cūlābhaya⁹ are called gamani in the inscriptions. Hence it is beyond doubt that gamani was a title of ancient rulers of Ceylon and not a part of their personal name as the chronicle would have us believe. It is also important to note that there are several documents in which the king is simply named Gamani Abhaya without any other epithet such as raja, maharaja or devenapiya. Thus Duṭṭhagāmaṇī,¹⁰ Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī,¹¹ Kuṭakanna Tissa¹² and Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī¹³ are simply referred to as gamani in some inscriptions. Such references as these indicate that gamani was

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1. EZ.V.p.210(2), p.217 (31), p.231-232;
UCR.VII.p.241, note.32
 2. EZ.V.p.217(34), p.220(46,47), p.231
 3. JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.136-137 No.3(1); ASCAR.1933, J 14(57),
The Kalkulam inscription was identified as referring to Gajabāhu.
But since then Nicholas corrected this error, after reading
Duṭaga in front of gamani; see, UCR.VII.p.247; AC.pp.439-440
(53,54); ASCAR.1935. J 10 (41); UCR.VII.p.238, note.4
 4. EZ.I.p.144; EZ.V.p.211(4); p.232; ASCAR.1935 J 9(39)
 5. EZ.I.p.148; ASCAR.1933 J 14 (56), Nicholas ascribes this to
Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī without doubt, UCR.VII.p.238, note.5; JCBRAS.NS.V.
p.151(10)
 6. AC.pp.451-452(78); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142
 7. ASC.SPR.1896.p.58(II)No.56; ASCAR.1934. J 18 (71,IV) UCR.VII.
p.238, note.7, p.243, note.51; EZ.V.pp.252 ff (1-11)
 8. CJSG.II.p.126(525); CJSG.II.p.179(700), p.218(700)
 9. CJSG.II.p.150.note.1, Gamani Tisa by whom the record was engraved
should be Cūlābhaya.
 10. ASCAR.1935 J 10 (41)
 11. ASCAR.1933 J 14 (56), see above note.5
 12. ASCAR.1934.J.18 (71-iv); UCR.VII.p.243, note.51
 13. CJSG.II.p.179 (700), p.218 (700)

considered a sufficient royal title.

A further examination of the inscriptions reveals that the term gamani was not restricted to the main line of kings at Anuradhapura. For we find the title being used among various local rulers who flourished in the country between the third and the first centuries B.C. The Yaṭṭahalena inscription of Beligal Korale, Kegalle District, refers to a Gamani, the son of prince (aya) Dusatara.¹ At Kusalānakaṇḍa, in the District of Batticaloa, a prince was named gamani Tisa. He was the son of a raja named Abaya.² In the same district, at a place called Henannegala a prince named gamani Tisa, the son of a raja named Majhima is mentioned.³ Further south, at a place called Bovattegala, inscriptions give the genealogy of a royal family, the foremost ancestor of which was Gamani.⁴ To these inscriptional references we may add the legendary figure of Dīghagāmaṇī, the suitor of Ummādacittā, in the Paṇḍukābhaya legend.⁵ All these references to gamanis outside the main line of kings at Anuradhapura establish that gamani was a title taken by the early rulers of Ceylon who exercised absolute authority over the whole Island or a considerable part of it, or by petty local rulers whose rule did not extend beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

An examination of the titles used by the early rulers of Ceylon indicates that the terms devanapiya and maharaja were used exclusively by the rulers of Anuradhapura⁶ whereas gamani and perhaps raja were common to all who claimed to rule any part

1. CJSG.II.p.203 (618), p.177

2. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

3. AC.p.446 (67)

4. CJSG.II.pp.99-100, pp.114-115 (462-465)

5. Mv.9.13

6. See below, pp. 58-9; 73-4

of the Island. As will be shown, the titles devanapiya and maharaja were introduced to the Island in the reign of Devāṇāpiya Tissa, the former becoming exclusively a family name.¹ Hence gamani and possibly raja were the titles used by the rulers of the country before the time of Devāṇāpiya Tissa, and these continued even after him.

Raja indicates rulership² and is a fitting title to be assumed by a leader claiming authority over a group of people whatever the territorial extent of his rule. But the term gamani and its use by the supreme rulers of the country is beset with difficulties, the solution of which may provide a key to the solution of the whole problem of the origin of kingship in the Island.³

Gamani as a title is not confined to Ceylon but was in use in India ever since the time of the R̥gveda. Therefore a study of the use of the term in India contributes to the understanding of its application in Ceylon. The Sanskrit word grāmanī from which the Sinhalese gamani is derived signifies a leader, a chief of a village or a community, and the leader of a troop of soldiers.⁴ The Pali equivalent, gāmanī, has a similar meaning and denotes a village headman or the head of a company, a chief, etc.⁵

1. See below, pp. 75-6

2. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv. Monier Williams.

3. For an earlier examination of this problem see, S. Paranavitana, 'Two Royal Titles of the Early Sinhalese and the Origin of Kingship in Ancient Ceylon', JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936, pp.443-462

4. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv. Monier Williams.

5. Pali Dictionary, sv. PTS

The exact position that the grāmanī enjoyed in India is a matter of debate. In the Rgveda the term occurs only twice;¹ the grāmanī is described as the king of the people (nrpatiṃ jánānam).² Geldner states that the grāmanī in the early period was not necessarily the later village mayor who was a Vaiśya.³ Grāma seems to mean a troop in some passages of the Rgveda⁴ and H. Zimmer considered that the gramani had only military functions.⁵ The grāmanī figures among rajakṛts in the Atharvaveda.⁶

On the analogy of the use of grāmanī in India with special reference to village headmanship at a later date, it has been suggested that the association of the title gamani with the ancient Sinhalese kings is sufficient proof that kingship in Ceylon developed out of the village system.⁷ But there are two serious objections to such a contention. First, if the term gamani was in any way connected with the system of village headmanship one can hardly expect the term to have been used by kings along with such grandiloquent titles as maharaja and devenapiya. The more serious objection, perhaps, is the existence

1. Rgveda.X.107.5; X.62.11

2. Rgveda.X.107.5

3. Der R̥gveda. Translated: (into German) by Karl Geldner. 3 volumes, Harvard Oriental Series, Cambridge, (Massachusetts) vol.33, 1951. note on X.62.11

4. Rgveda.III.33.11; I.100.10

5. H. Zimmer, Altindisches Leben.p.171

6. Atharvaveda.III.5.7

7. IACI.I.p.45

in Ceylon of a term, gamika, used undoubtedly by village headmen.¹ Sanskrit grāmika and Pali gamika both mean a villager and do not connote any official designation.² But the term gamika used in early Brahmi inscriptions was an official designation which distinguished gamikas from ordinary householders (gahapati); the term gamika stood for the village headman.³ The existence of this separate term for village headmen is a strong argument against associating gamanis with the system of village administration. On the basis of these considerations, any association of gamanis in Ceylon with the village headman system is highly unlikely. Hence we have to lean more towards the other meanings of the term grāmanī in our attempt to find out the exact usage of the term in Ceylon.

The establishment of the real significance of gāma may be very instructive in understanding the term gāmanī, as the first colonists are said to have founded gāmas which seem to have given rise to political leadership in the Island. The Sanskrit grāma has the meaning of a village as well as a number of associated people or a troop of soldiers.⁴ The Pali gāma means a village as opposed to the arañña, the uninhabited forest;⁵ in the following pages we will discuss whether this is the meaning of gāma as

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1. Inscriptions of gamikas are numerous, see for instance, CJS.G.II.p.124(516), (517), p.125(519), p.127(530), (532), p.202 (616), p.206(630), p.225(744), (746), p.226(752); JCB.RAS.NS.II. p.130 (27), p.131 (28,29,30), p.132(47,61); p.136(1), p.139 (3); UCR.VIII.pp.125-126
 2. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv. Monier Williams; Pali Dictionary, sv. (PTS)
 3. UCR.VIII.p.125 f
 4. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv. Monier Williams.
 5. Pali Dictionary, sv. (PTS)

applied to the early colonies of Ceylon.

Vijaya and his followers are said to have established gāmas in and around the northwestern parts of the Island.¹ An amacca named Anurādha founded the Anuradhagāma near the bank of the Kadamba river.² The Upatissagāma was established by the purohita named Upatissa.³ Another three amaccas founded the Ujjeni(gāma), Uruvela(gāma) and Vijitanagara.⁴ Vijaya himself founded the Tambapanninagara.⁵ In the legend of Paṇḍukābhaya the Mahāvamsa states that the brothers of Bhaddakaccānā who followed their sister settled in various places of the Island with the consent of the Anuradhapura king.⁶ The place where Rāma took up his residence was known as Rāmagona, while the sites of Uruvela and Anurādha were known after Uruvela and Anuradha. Similarly the places where Vijita, Dīghāyu and Rohana resided came to be known as Vijitagāma, Dīghāyu and Rohana.⁷ The Dīpavamsa also has an account of the settlements made by the colonists in the Island. According to this chronicle, Vijaya established Tambapanninagara which was the first of its kind to be set up in the Island.⁸ Vijita and Uruvela set up Vijita (gāma or nagara) and Uruvela (gāma or nagara). An amacca having the name of Nakkhatta (constellation of Anurādha)

1. Mv.7.43-45

2. Mv.7.43

3. Mv.7.44

4. Mv.7.45

5. Mv.7.39

6. Mv.9.6-8

7. Mv.9.9 -10

8. Dv.9.31

established Anuradhapura.¹ Accutagāmi founded Ujjeni.² Upatissa established Upatissanagara.³ The Dīpavaṃsa also gives the names of the brothers of Bhaddakaccānā but they are not connected with the establishment of settlements. The names given are Rāma, Tissa, Anurādha, Mahāli, Dīghāvu, Rohini, and Gāmanī.⁴ The list differs only very slightly from the names of the brothers of Bhaddakaccānā who established settlements according to the Mahāvaṃsa.

A close study of these legends of Vijaya's followers and Bhaddakaccānā's brothers setting up gāmas and nagaras in the Island show that they relate genuine traditions about the establishment of colonies by the immigrants from northwestern India. These traditions must have been current among the people from whose hands they reached the literati, the Sangha, who were already intent upon constructing the history of the Island. There seem to have been various traditions about the origin of the settlements of the colonists from north India in the Island, and the authors of our chronicles appear to have tried to put these traditions in a coherent form. This is why the same settlement is said to have been twice established by two different persons.⁵ It seems that there were several legends about the founding of Anuradhapura for the Paṇḍukābhaya legend describes it as the work of Paṇḍukābhaya which was named Anuradhapura because it was founded under the constellation of

1. Dv.9.35

2. Dv.9.36

3. Dv.9.36

4. Dv.10.6

5. Cf. Mv.7.43-45 with Mv.9.9-10

Anurādha.¹

The use of the words gāma and pura (or nagara) indicates that several traditions concerning colonization are interwoven in the chronicles. In the first list of the Mahāvamsa the settlement made by Vijita is called Vijitagāma whereas in the second list it is Vijitanagara. In the Dīpavamsa list Tambapaṇṇi is called nagara and Anuradhagāma of the Mahāvamsa is called Anuradhapura. Similarly Upatissagāma is called Upatissanagara. All the other places listed are given without any suffix of either gāma or nagara. In a later verse Upatissanagara is called Upatissagāma. These variations show that at the beginning all the settlements were gāmas and that later some developed into nagaras or puras.

Of these place names only Anuradhagāma, Dīghāvu and Rohana were destined to survive. We find them as Anuradhapura, Dīghavāpi and Rohanajanapada or Rohana in later times. Hence most of these gāmas and nagaras (or puras) seem to have assimilated into larger political units.

Thus the early settlements of north Indian immigrants, which were known as gāmas and nagaras, either grew to be places of greater magnitude or died out. The precise meaning of the term gāma as applied to these settlements is of importance, for presumably the leaders of these gāmas came to be known as gāmanīs.

The Mahāvamsa, which states that Vijaya's amaccas established gāmas, records at the end of the episode that Vijaya's amaccas

1. Mv.10.76, Here the author attempts to explain an apparent contradiction by referring to the two earlier Anurādhas.

assembled after settling janapadas and asked him to be consecrated king.¹ The Dīpavaṃsa also states that 'seven years after the arrival of Vijaya, the Island was covered with (ākinno) janapadas'.² Hence gāma seems to have been equivalent to janapada in meaning, at least in the instances referred to above.

But this evidence is not sufficient to identify janapada with gāma in the absence of any corroboration. The term janapada, which is less common in the two chronicles, is used extensively in the Sahassavatthupparakāraṇa and the Sīhalavatthupparakāraṇa, which are considered to represent a tradition which developed in Rohana. A further study of the term janapada in relation to gāma may help to establish not only the real significance of gāma but also the position of the leader of the gāma i.e., gāmanī.

Of the settlements mentioned in our lists of gāmas set up by the early colonists, only Rohana goes by the term janapada in the chronicles, although the settlements are collectively referred to as janapada.³ The Samantapāsādikā,⁴ the Mahāvamsa⁵ the Vamsatthappakāsini⁶ and the Culavamsa⁷ all refer to Rohana as Rohanajanapada at least once, and the Sahassavatthupparakāraṇa and the Sīhalavatthupparakāraṇa invariably call Rohana

1. Mv.7.46

2. Dv.9.38

3. See above, notes 1, 2.

4. Smp.p.100

5. Mv.36.125

6. Vamsatthappakāsini. p.451 L.30

7. Cv.44.54-55

Rohanajanapada.¹ Perhaps this is because Rohana, one of the gāmas (settlements) established by the early colonists, was known as Rohanajanapada from the very beginning and this name survived unlike many other places. This suggests that janapada was used interchangeably with gāma to denote the settlements established by early colonists.

That janapada and gāma were identical in meaning receives further confirmation from various occurrences of these two terms in the Sahassavatthupparakāṇa and the Sīhalavatthupparakāṇa and sometimes in the chronicles. First, instances could be quoted where janapada is given as an equivalent to gāma. A janapada was given by the king to a ratthika as his gāma.² Rohanajanapada is said to have been given as the bhuttagāma to an upāsikā by the king.³ Ambatitthagāma is called Ambatitthajanapada.⁴

Secondly, the Sahassavatthupparakāṇa and the Sīhalavatthupparakāṇa record several instances when the same name is given to both janapada and gāma. There was a Hankālagāma in Hankālanapada,⁵ and a gāma and janapada around Dīghāvugāma was named Sokadhūtika or Sokadhūmika.⁶ A certain gāma and janapada

1. Sahassavatthupparakāṇa. pp. 49, 50, 53, 62, 69, 93, 100, 113, 184, 185; Sīhalavatthupparakāṇa. 10, 15, 39, 50, 52, 85, 105, 107

2. Ssvp. p. 124

3. Ssvp. p. 69

4. Ssvp. p. 50-52

5. Svp. p. 89 (1)

6. Svp. p. 97

were granted to an upāsaka and were known by his name.¹ These large tracks of land may have been called janapadas and gāmas without distinction at the beginning. Later, when gāma acquired the specific connotation of 'village', a certain limited area of the larger unit, (perhaps the more important area of it,) might have come to be known as gāma in the limited sense of a village.

Thirdly, the application of gāma and janapada with the same connotation may also be seen when the terms are found in various combination such as janapadagāma, gāmasahassaṃjanapadena, gāmasataṃcasahajanapadena, gāmaṃ saha janapadena &c.² On one occasion a trader is said to have gone to a janapadagāma and the same place is called gāma few lines below.³ Again a thera is said to have left the janapada because it was not conducive to his spiritual progress, and entered the arañña. The same thera was looked after by a single family of the gāma.⁴ A certain amacca who was sent to Mahagāma (as the governor) was said to have been harassing the people of the janapada. The king admonished him not to bear hard upon the people of Rohanajanapada.⁵

And finally, janapada stands in opposition to nagara (or pura) and sometimes arañña. The people of purās and janapadas came to the place where the Mahāthūpa was.⁶ An upāsaka

1. Svp.p.99

2. Svp.pp.91,96,99,162

3. Ssvp.p.42 (the reference is to the time of Kassapa Buddha.)

4. Svp.p.153

5. Ssvp.pp.66-67

6. Mv.29.22

gave requisites to the Sangha coming from nagara and janapada.¹ People from nagaras and janapadas assembled to choose a king.² On one occasion, janapada is opposed to arañña.³ In all these instances it is the term gāma which is generally used in the Pali canon.

One striking feature about the use of the term janapada is that all the janapadas mentioned in the Mahāvamsa and in the other sources are situated in Rohana. The Mahāvamsa mentions Kelivāta janapada, Giri janapada Koṭṭhivāla janapada, Hatthibhoga janapada and Dīghavāpi janapada which are all in Rohana.⁴ The Vamsatthappakāsinī adds Ambatṭhakola janapada which was also in Rohana.⁵ The Sahassavatthupparāṇa mentions Koṭṭhivāla janapada and Marukanda janapada which were in Rohana⁶ and Mankuna janapada which was in the paccimapassa.⁷

1. Svp.p.138

2. Svp.p.163

3. Ssvp.p.77

4. Mv.30.29, (Colombo edition, Geiger's edition gives this as Koṭṭhivāla janapada but the Vamsatthappakāsinī edited by Malalasekara gives Kelivāta as a variant.)
Mv.23.49; 23.68; 35.44; 24.2

5. Vamsatthappakāsinī, p.150 L.15

6. A Ketahāla janapada is mentioned in the Sahassavatthupparāṇa but its location is not stated. But as the first part of the story is related to the region of Dakkhina Malaya, Ketahāla janapada may have been in the same area. (Ssvp.p.124). The Sahassavatthupparāṇa mentions a certain Ambatitthagāma which is elsewhere called janapada, Ssvp.pp50-52; Ssvp.pp.91,107

7. Ssvp.p.176, Probably in the lower regions of North Western Province or in the Western Province.

The Sīhalavatthupparakaraṇa mentions Bodhipitthi janapada in Rohana.¹ There is one Girivāya janapada of which the location is not certain and this may be the same as the Giri janapada of the Mahāvamsa.²

The fact that all the janapadas mentioned in the chronicles fall in the regions of Rohana and not in Anuradhapura kingdom and that Rohana itself was known as a janapada can only be satisfactorily explained by assuming that janapadas in the Anuradhapura kingdom ceased to exist as separate political units with the growth of royal power. Such janapadas as may have existed were incorporated in the larger political unit, that of the Anuradhapura kingdom, and for a short time these would have continued to be known as gāmas or purās (or nagaras) in a more restricted sense. It is most probably at this stage that various traditions about the origins of these settlements reached the hands of the literati. This may be the reason why these places are called gāmas and nagaras (or purās) and not janapadas, except when taken collectively. It is clear from the above evidence that the original meaning of gāma, similar to janapada, must have been quite forgotten by the time the tradition took the shape we find in the chronicles. But in Rohana several centuries elapsed before the Anuradhapura ruler could establish a centralised form of government, and even then Rohana was far less controlled by the centre than the regions of Anuradhapura. This appears to be the reason why so many janapadas survived in Rohana whereas all traces of them disappeared in Anuradhapura.

1. Svp.P.37 (7)

2. Svp.P.99 (1)

The terms grāma and jana in Vedic literature also seem to have had allied meanings. H.Zimmer took jana as equal to clan, which incorporated within itself both viś and kula.¹ In the Rgveda jana is sometimes used as equivalent to grāma.² Bharatas are called both jana and grāma.³ Similarly pañcajana is used to denote the five tribes.⁴ In several passages of the Rgveda grāma occurs with the derivative sense of a body of men and in this it is equivalent to jana.⁵ Sharma points out that janapada is equivalent to rāṣṭra in the post-Maurya period and is abbreviated as jana in the Gupta period.⁶

On the analogy of the above usage of grāma and jana, coupled with the fact that gāma and janapada are closely associated in meaning in our sources, it is reasonable to assume that gāma as applied to the early settlements in Ceylon indicated a large settlement of people rather than a village in any ordinary sense.

This assumption is further supported by several instances of the term gāma in the aṭṭhakathās and in the Pali canon. The Samantapāsādikā states that the compound ekakulassagamo denotes the gāma of a single king or a bhojaka.⁷ Nānākulassagāmo refers to gāmas of various kings or bhojakas like Vesāli or Kusinārā.⁸

1. H.Zimmer, Altindisches Leben, pp.159-160

2., 3., Rgveda.III.53.12; III.33.11

4. Rgveda.I.89.10; III.59.8; VI.11.4; VI.51.11

5. Rgveda.I.100; II.12.7; III.33.11; X.127.5; Cf. also Atharvaveda. IV.7.5; Śatapata Brāhmaṇa. IV.1.5.2; VI.7.4.9; XII.4.1.3

6. R.S.Sharma, Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India, p.35

7. Smp. p.652

8. Smp.p.652

To this we may add Rāmagāma where the Koliya clan lived.¹ These instances show that gāma indicated a wider idea than a village. Further the Sahassavatthuppakarana states that the king granted the land beyond Dāduru Oya to Nandimitta as his bhogagāma.² Some of the caste name-endings of present day Ceylon, such as Govigama, Halāgama and Batgama, end with gama which has nothing to do with a village. Janapada is also applied with a very wide range of meaning in the Pali canon as evidenced by the term solasa mahā janapada which denotes the sixteen great kingdoms in India in the time of the Buddha.

The above examination shows first, that the gāmas were the early settlements established by the pioneer colonists in the Island; secondly, that the term janapada was also used to denote these settlements; thirdly, that gāma and janapada had an equivalent meaning at the beginning; and finally, these two terms indicated not villages but large settlements, perhaps of clans. Hence it stands to reason that gāmanī was the leader of these large settlements and not a village headman.

The Mahāvamsa states that Duṭṭhagāmanī was named Gāmanī to indicate his leadership of Mahāgāma.³ By the same token the leader of Anuradhagāma could well have been called gāmanī.⁴

More important is the question of the essential character of this leadership. Parānavitana in discussing this problem

1. Dīgha Nikāya. II.p.167

2. Ssvp.p.28

3. Mv.22.71

4. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936. p.444

concluded that gāmanīs were popularly elected leaders of the community.¹ Pointing out the existence of parumakas in ancient Ceylon he conjectured that they represented a popular form of government similar to that which existed in India during the time of the Buddha.² He also suggests that, since the Island seems to have been colonised by merchants who were attracted to the Island because of the valuable commodities it yielded, as these settlements spread and increased they may have felt the need for a government; to fulfil this necessity they may have elected one of their number as magistrate³, and, as time went on, introduced hereditary principle.⁴ Kings continued to use the title gāmani along with more appropriate titles like maharaja and devenapiya, Paranavitana says, because it was continued as a legacy of the past.⁵

However, if gamani indicated the elected leadership of the parumakas - just a primus inter pares according to Paranavitana⁶ - one would expect the kings to have dropped the title gamani altogether, at least after the abhiṣeka of Devanāṃpiya Tissa⁷ or with the accession of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.⁸ But the title was continued right down to the end of the first dynasty, and one of

1. Paranavitana, 'Two Royal Titles of the Early Sinhalese and the Origin of Kingship in Ancient Ceylon'.

JRAS. GB & Ir. 1936. pp.443-462. passim

2. JRAS.GB & Ir.1936.pp.447-449

3. JRAS.GB. & Ir.1936.p.459

4. JRAS.GB. & Ir.1936.p.460

5. JRAS.GB. & Ir.1936.p.446

6. JRAS.GB. & Ir.1936. p.449

7. See below, pp. 33 ff

8. See below, pp. 134 ff

the most powerful princes in the line of Vasabha tried to revive it.¹ Hence we must conclude that the title gāmanī carried with it some ideas which brought fame and repute to its bearer.

The term gāmanī occurs very rarely in Pali works written in Ceylon but such instances give a clue to the character of gamanis in early Ceylon. In the Samanatapāsādikā the term coragāmaniko is explained as corajetthako 'leader of robbers'.² In the Manorathapūranī pūgagāmanika is explained as ganajetthaka, 'head of a guild'.³ The Mahāvamsa, explaining the name Gāmanī Abhaya given to the prince Dutthagāmanī by his father, states that he was called gāmanī because of his leadership of Mahāgāma.⁴ The Vamsatthappakāsini commenting on this verse states that he was called gāmanī because of his leadership of the expanding city of Mahāgāma.⁵ The Vamsatthappakāsini calls the leader of an armed band of brigands a gāmanī; when this leader of robbers was killed another warrior-like person was appointed to the post of gāmanī. This gāmanī, referred to as purecārīka sūra purisa, was the founder of the Nanda dynasty in India.⁶ The Extended Mahāvamsa also calls this person gāmanī.⁷ The above usages of the term in Pali works composed in Ceylon make it clear that it denoted leadership and in particular a kind of warlike leadership. This is in consonance with the use of the term to denote a troop leader in Vedic literature, which H.Zimmer

1. Mv.35.115

2. Smp.p.662

3. Manorathapūranī.III.pp.261,350

4. Mv.22.71

5. Vamsatthappakāsini. p.443, L1.1-4, Vaddhamānakamhi nagare could also mean in the city of that name in the Mahāgāma.

6. Vamsatthappakāsini. pp.178-179

7. Extended Mahāvamsa. 5.34

thought the only meaning attached to the word.¹

A single epigraphical record seems to corroborate this martial connotation. The Nāval Ār inscription² mentions a certain ati acariya gamani which may signify either a leader of soldiers mounted on elephants or a corporation of elephant trainers. It should also be noted that this is the only use of the term gamani in an inscription where it is not certain that the reference is to a member of a royal family. The explanation of this irregularity seems two-fold. Either this ati acariya belonged to a royal family, which entitles him to the use of the title,³ or the inscription represents a vestige of the usage of the term at an earlier date when gāmanīs were still troop leaders and the term was not restricted to royalty.⁴

Another term which is almost always used when the king takes the title of gamani is Abhaya. This term deserves our special attention as it is hardly ever found among the names or titles of Indian kings. An examination of this term is sure to throw further light on the character of gamani. According to legend, the name Abhaya was borne by a king who ruled the Island during the time of a previous Buddha.⁵ The next person to bear it was the son of Paṇḍuvāsudeva, his successor on the throne.⁶ Then

1. See above, p. 14; Sharma writes "in all likelihood he (grāmanī) still continued the old practice of leading little groups of people to the battlefield...." Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India. p.136.

2. UCR.VII.p.246; Cf. also, JRAS.GB & Ir.1936,p.446

3. UCR.VII.p.246

4. JRAS.GB & Ir.1936,p.446

5. Mv.15.58-59

6. Mv.9.1,12,29

comes Paṇḍukābhaya, the semi-mythical popular hero of the early legend.¹ When we come to more historical times the first king to bear this name is Goṭhābhaya in Rohana.² But the Abhaya par-excellance was Dutthagāmaṇī,³ and a worthy successor who bore that name was Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī.⁴ In the period that followed Kuṭakanna Tissa,⁵ Bhātika Abhaya,⁶ Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya,⁷ and Cūlābhaya,⁸ had Abhaya as a part of their names. Among the kings of the line of Vasabha, Gajabāhuka Gāmaṇī Abhaya,⁹ Abhayanāga,¹⁰ and Goṭhābhaya¹¹ (Meghavaṇṇābhaya) can be cited as those who bear this name.

Abhaya never stood as a personal name of a king on its own except in legend, when the son of Paṇḍuvāsudeva is named Abhaya. All the other kings - Paṇḍukābhaya, Goṭhābhaya,

1. Mv.9.27
2. Mv.22.10-11
3. Mv.22.71; JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.136-137 No.3 (1); ASCAR.1933. J 14 (57) see above, p.11 note, 3; AC.439-440 (53-54); ASCAR.1935.J 10 (41); UCR.VII.p.238 note,4
4. Mv.33.83; EZ.I.p.148; ASCAR.1933, J 14 (56), see above, p.11 note,5; UCR.VII.p.238, note.5; JCBRAS.NS.V.p.151 (10)
5. ASC.SPR.1896 p.58 (No.56); ASCAR.1934.J 18 (74,iv); UCR.VII.p.239, note.7; UCR.VII.p.243,note,51; EZ.V.pp.252-258 (1-10)
6. Mv.34.37
7. Mv.35.1; CJSG.II.p.126 (525),p.179 (700)
8. Mv.35.12; CJSG.II.p.150,note.1. Gamani Tisa, son of raja Abaya should be Cūlābhaya, son of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya,
9. EZ.I.p.211; EZ.III.p.116; ASC.SPR.1896.p.58,No.57; CALR.III.p.215 (12); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134.(65)
10. Mv.36.42,51
11. Mv.36.98

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa (Puṭakana Gamani Abhaya), Bhātika Abhaya, Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya, Cūlābhaya, Gajabāhuka Gāmaṇī Abhaya, Abhayanāga and Goṭhābhaya (Meghavaṇṇābhaya) - have an additional prefix or suffix which stands as the distinctive part of the personal name of the king. Moreover, some kings whose personal names are given as Tissa in the chronicle, such as Lajji Tissa and Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa,¹ are termed both Tissa and Abhaya. Similarly Bhātika Abhaya and Cūlābhaya are called Batiya Tisa² and Gamani Tisa³ in some of the inscriptions. All this shows that Abhaya is something added to the personal name of the king rather than a personal name. Another striking fact which supports the same conclusion is that although Abhaya was a very popular name among royalty this is extremely rare as a personal name among the common people.

By the end of our period Abhaya changed to apaya and was used merely as a title. It has been suggested that apaya may have been derived from Skt. āryapāda⁴ but this derivation is rather far-fetched. Apart from the close similarity of the two terms apaya and abaya (as it is found in the inscriptions) we may point out an exact instance when apaya replaces abaya. The Timbirivāva inscription of the reign of Goṭhābhaya names him as raja mekavana abaya.⁵ His grandson, who was named after him, is called sirimeka maharaja apaya in an inscription found at Karambagala.⁶

1. EZ.I.p.144 (1); EZ.V.pp.252-258 (1-11); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142

2. Bell's reading of the inscription at Koṭaveheragala is not accurate, see, EZ.V.p.255; CALR.III.p.205.3 (No.1)

3. CJSG.II.p.150.note.1. see ^{above} p.29 note.8

4. EZ.III.p.124

5. EZ.IV.p.227

6. EZ.III.p.179,note.3

Hence it seems certain that apaya is derived from abaya. The term aba prefixed or suffixed to Salamevan in the ninth and tenth century inscriptions¹ may be another stage of this evolution. Thus throughout the whole Anuradhapura period Abhaya or a variation of that term formed a part of the royal name. We may also point out that Abhaya was a popular name among the local rulers who flourished before the first century B.C.²

Abhaya literally means fearless, undaunted, etc.³ The association of this word with gamani in the name of kings is suggestive of the warlike character of the leadership in early Ceylon. If gamani was continued as a royal title because it was a legacy of the past,⁴ Abhaya must have retained for the same reason. A fact which supports this point is the warlike nature of the three princes who stand out as gāmanī Abhaya par excellence; Dutthagāmanī Abhaya, Vatthagāmanī Abhaya and Gajabāhuka Gāmanī Abhaya.⁵

In the light of the above data we may arrive at the following conclusions: first, Abhaya was only an additional part of the names of kings like gamani and not a personal name; second, it always appeared along with the title gamani; third, it was preserved as a part of the name of kings until the end

1. See for instance, EZ.I.pp.43,84.

2. ASCAR.1934. J 21 (78)
AC.p.421, p.445 (66)
ASCAR.1933. J 19 (84)
AIC.No.34

3. Pali Dictionary, sv. PTS.

4. See above, p. 26

5. UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.144-163; p.165-172; p.182-185

of Anuradhapura period; fourth, abhaya meant fearlessness. We have already seen that gamani was used in the sense of a warlike leader, and all this, and the fact that it was not a popular name either among the common people or among the Indian royalty, suggests that the Sinhalese kings used the term because of special connotations which fitted well into the office they held. Hence we may conclude that the rulers of ancient Ceylon were known as gamani Abhayas because they were supposed to be fearless warriors.

It is therefore likely that the word gamani was used in early Ceylon in the sense of a warlike leader. The term was continued as a royal title even after kingship developed far beyond the warrior leadership of the early settlements, for the idea of a warrior king added prestige to the royal office even after it had ceased to be primarily a military institution. It is therefore not surprising that a warlike prince such as Gajābahuka Gāmanī tried to revive it at a time when the title had obviously fallen into desuetude. Thus the origin of kingship in Ceylon seems to lie in the warlike leadership which emerged in response to the needs of the communities of pioneering settlers of north Indian immigrants to Ceylon.

The earliest parts of the chronicles, which relate the history of the Island from its very beginning when the country was colonised by immigrants from north India, agree well with this. These episodes cannot be taken as true history, but neither can we discard the Vijaya story and the Paṇḍukābhaya legend as mere fabrications. They establish one fact, namely that the early colonists had to wage an incessant war against aborigines and sometimes against the later arrivals before they

could establish a more settled form of life. Under such conditions it is only natural that the settlers of any area should organise themselves under a warrior, and it was this leadership which later blossomed into kingship.

* * * *

In the evolution of the local military leader into full-fledged king, with all the paraphernalia of kingship, the most important land-mark was the consecration of Devānāmpiya Tissa.

All of our sources place special emphasis on the consecration of Devānāmpiya Tissa at the instance of the emperor Aśoka and this emphasis itself implies that it was regarded as a major event by the people, both contemporary and of succeeding generations. The Dīpavaṃsa, the Samantapāsādikā the Mahāvāṃsa and the Vāṃsatthappakāsinī furnish valuable details of this event and are basically in agreement. The Vāṃsatthappakāsinī, which is of a later date, provides us with a mine of additional information, but this must be examined critically before being accepted as authentic, even though the text specifically states that it cites these details from an older source which is no longer extant.¹

1. Vāṃsatthappakāsinī states that it is quoting these details from Cūlasīhanāda Sutta Vaṃṇanā (Sīhalatṭhakathā of Majjhima Saṅgīti,) which is no longer extant.
Vāṃsatthappakāsinī. p.305

According to the Mahāvamsa, at the first consecration of king Devānampiya Tissa various valuables were brought to the surface of the earth because of his merit. Among these were the three miraculous bamboo stems (venu yaṭṭhi) found at the foot of the Chāta mountain. Precious gems and pearls made their way to the palace.¹ Devānampiya Tissa, considering what he should do with these, decided to send them to his unseen friend (adiṭṭha sahāyaka) as gifts.² Hence he appointed as envoys his nephew Mahāriṭṭha, a Brahmana, an amacca and a ganaka (an accountant) and sent them with a body of retainers to the emperor Aśoka. The envoys took all of these precious articles to Aśoka, including the three bamboo stems and a spiral shell winding toward the right.³

Aśoka was so pleased with the mission that he conferred various honours upon the envoys. He made the king's nephew senāpati, and the Brahmana a purohita. The position of daṇḍanāyake was conferred on the amacca and the ganaka was made a seṭṭhi.⁴ Then the emperor gave these envoys everything that was necessary for royal consecration and asked them to perform the abhiṣeka of the Sinhalese ruler yet again.⁵ The Samantapāsādikā states that king Aśoka sent pañca rāja kakudha bhaṇḍa i.e., the regalia which are five in number. These are the canopy, fan, sword, diadem and sandals.⁶ The other sources

1. Mv.11.8-17

2. Mv.11.18-19

3. Mv.11.20-22, this is the auspicious direction.

4. Mv.11.25-26

5. Mv.11.27-32,36

6. Smp.p.75. The text also mentions a few other articles, and then quotes the Dīpavamsa for details.

give a long list of articles in addition to these.¹ The emperor also sent the message of Dhamma with the envoys.² The envoys on their return consecrated the Sinhalese ruler in the name of Aśoka and celebrated the event on a magnificent scale.³

Now the question arises why Devānampiya Tissa sent to Aśoka all the valuables that appeared because of his merit. The reason given in the chronicle is their unseen friendship.⁴ The Mahāvamsa also relates that these two persons were brothers in a previous birth and did meritorious work together.⁵ But these explanations do not carry conviction.

The significance of the whole episode becomes clear only if we examine it in the context of the growth of historical tradition in Ceylon. The chronicles are mainly concerned with the history of the Sasana in the Island, and in this respect the introduction of the faith into the Island takes a very important place. The monks who transmitted the historical tradition spared no pains to high-light the role of the great Indian benefactor of their faith, Aśoka, in introducing Buddhism into the Island. The supposed relationship of Aśoka and Devānampiya Tissa afforded them an opportunity to show how Aśoka was personally involved in the conversion of the Island. It is also possible that the monks were quite aware that the sending of

1. Dv.11.32-34; 12.1-4; Mv.11.27-32

2. Mv.11.33-35

3. Mv.11.40-42

4. Mv.11.19, Cf. also, Dv.11.23-26

5. Mv.5.49-61

gifts to the great Mauryan emperor signified the inferior diplomatic status of the Anuradhapura ruler and that they therefore attempted to cover it up by the invention of the story of the mutual exchange of gifts.¹

Similar stories found in Pali commentaries lend support to this suggestion. The Paramatthajotikā relates how a king named Kaṭṭhavāhanarājā received the message of Dhamma in return for gifts sent to his unseen friend (aditṭhasāhayaka), the king of Bārānasi.² The Papañcasūdanī tells how king Bimbisāra of Magadha sent the message of Dhamma to king Pukkusāti, the ruler of Taxila, in return for valuable gifts (pañṇakāra) the latter had sent to him. Bimbisāra did this because he could not find anything worthy enough to send as a return gift.³ These stories suggest the possibility that the story of Aśoka sending the message of Dhamma and the abhiṣeka 'as return gifts' was a reinterpretation of events by monks to suit their purpose.⁴ Hence the reason given in the chronicles is not adequate to explain why Devānaṃpiya Tissa sent so many valuable articles to Aśoka and why Aśoka should have sent the regalia necessary for a coronation as return-gifts, nor why he should have asked the envoys to consecrate their ruler in his name.

1. See below, p. 37

2. Paramatthajotikā pp.575-579 (PTS. II & III)

3. Papañcasūdanī. pp.33-46 (PTS.V)

4. See below. It should be pointed out that in all these three episodes even the terms used are the same - pañṇakāra, paṭipañṇakāra, dhammapañṇakāra, aditṭhasāhayaka - suggesting thereby the dependence of the Mahāvamsa story upon the commentaries. The Mahāvamsa states that Aśoka sent things for abhiṣeka and dhammapañṇakāra because he could not find anything worthy enough to be sent as return gifts. This finds its parallel in the story of the Papañcasūdanī. The Mahāvamsa also contains that Aśoka sent Devānaṃpiya Tissa dhammapañṇakāra. Mv.11. 33-35.

It has been suggested that due to the trade relationships between India and Ceylon there might have been some exchange of civilities between Aśoka and the Sinhalese ruler.¹ Whether or not such civilities existed it is likely that traders returning from India brought back with them tidings of the great Magadha emperor and his concern for the well being of the human race.

It is very strange that a ruler who received gifts from a friend of the same rank should send him in return the things that are necessary for coronation and ask the envoys to perform the coronation of their master even though he had had a consecration ceremony at his accession.² It is more surprising that such a request would be gracefully accepted and acted upon by any ruler who considered himself equal in rank,³ because receiving consecration at the hand of some other ruler would definitely imply subordination to that ruler. Presumably it is this fact which the monks were trying to conceal with the episode of the exchange of gifts between Devānaṃpiya Tissa and Aśoka and the story of their unseen friendship. In view of these circumstances it stands to reason that Devānaṃpiya Tissa sent gifts to Aśoka with a view to obtaining a consecration from him.

The immediate question which arises therefore is why Devānaṃpiya Tissa should supplicate a foreign ruler for a consecration which he had undergone at his accession. According to our chronicles the consecration ceremony was present in the Island from the time of the very first king. Vijaya was

1. UHC. I.Pt.1.p.133

2. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936.p.455

3. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936.p.455

consecrated by his amaccas.¹ Paṇḍuvāsudeva, Abhaya and Paṇḍukābhaya, were all consecrated kings.² Devānāmpiya Tissa was also consecrated on his accession to the throne which fell vacant on the demise of his father.³ If we accept these statements as true, the action of Devānāmpiya Tissa in soliciting a consecration ceremony from the Indian emperor was meaningless.⁴ But the Vamsatthappakāsinī tells a different story. The text states that when the envoys took gifts to the Indian emperor the latter inquired about the form of consecration that was in vogue in the Island, to which the envoys replied that there was no form of coronation other than the taking of a new staff (nava yatthi) by the new ruler. Accordingly Aśoka decided to perform the consecration of the Sinhalese ruler through the envoys.⁵ It may also be noted here that the Samantapāsādikā nowhere in its account of the consecration ceremony of Devānāmpiya Tissa refers to it as a second coronation.⁶

The attitude of the authors of the Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvāṃsa in maintaining that there was a consecration ceremony in Ceylon before the one introduced by Aśoka could be explained in a different way. In ancient times kingship was essentially bound up with the coronation ceremony; it was bestowed on the ruler by the performance of this ritual.⁷ Hence the chroniclers

1. Mv.7.71

2. Mv.8.26-27; 9.29; 10.78

3. Mv.11.7

4. See above, p. 37

5. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.306, L1.18-31

6. See for the details of consecration ceremony of Devānāmpiya Tissa in the Smp. pp.74-76

7. Śatapata Brāhmaṇa, V.3.4

who set about the task of making historical kings out of legendary figures tried their best to state specifically that they were consecrated kings.¹ The Mahāvamsa which always made it a point to refer to the consecration of the ruler before the time of Devānāmpiya Tissa pays hardly any attention to that event afterwards. It is also to be noted that all the chapters of the Mahāvamsa dealing with the legendary heroes are named Vijayābhiṣeka, Paṇḍuvāsudevābhiṣeka, Abhayābhiṣeka, Paṇḍukābhayābhiṣeka and finally Devānāmpiyābhiṣeka.² After this the titles of the chapters in the chronicle are altogether different. It follows from all this that the consecration of king Devānāmpiya Tissa at the 'request' of Aśoka was no second coronation but the first of its kind ever performed in Ceylon, and this could be regarded as the beginning of the flow of Indian ideas of kingship into this Island - a flow which was to have far-reaching consequences.

The statement in the Vamsatthappakāsinī that the rulers of Ceylon before the time of Devānāmpiya Tissa maintained their authority by taking up a new staff is further proof of this.³

1. Mv. 7.71; 8.26-27; 9.29; 10.78. Parānavitana explains this by stating that the author of the Mahāvamsa may have been describing events of an earlier date according to contemporary ideas, for monarchical form of government with all the paraphernalia of royalty was the only form of government known to him.

JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936. p.452

2. See end of relevant chapters.

3. Parānavitana suggests that the three bamboo stems that appeared at the first 'consecration' of Devānāmpiya Tissa were the Yatthis used as the symbol of royal authority.

JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936. pp.452-455

The staff or club was regarded as the emblem of royal authority in ancient times and the veneration of the staff is world-wide.¹ Kauṭilya identifies the sceptre or daṇḍa with punishment and daṇḍanīti with the science of government; the prosperity of the world depends upon the proper use of daṇḍa by kings.² Even today an ornamental club forms part of the regalia among some less civilised peoples.³ The staff was the emblem of royal authority in Rome during monarchical times,⁴ and it is mentioned in connexion with medieval European coronation.⁵ In our chronicles too there are a few instances which show that the staff formed the emblem of royal authority until it was later demoted to a position of lesser importance. The Mahāvamsa states that when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī marched forth against the Tamils the spear (kunta) was taken in front of his army.⁶ The kunta appears once again at the end of the second consecration ceremony of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya. It was taken in front of the royal procession which made its way to the Tissa tank to carry out the water ceremony which was performed at the end of the royal consecration.⁷ When the water ceremony was over, the kunta was not brought back to the palace but was later enshrined

1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.10,p.635

2. Arthaśāstra. Bk.I.ch.iv.9

3. Ency.Rel.Eth.10,p.634

4. Ibid.p.635

5. Ibid.p.636

6. Mv.25.1

7. Mv.26.9-10

in the Mirisavāṭi Cetiya.¹ Most probably Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was consecrated only after his victory at Anuradhapura and his first 'consecration' was no more than the same ceremony described in the Vamsatthappakāsinī as 'kings rule by taking a new yaṭṭhi'.² When the chatra or parasol replaced the yaṭṭhi - the equivalent of the kunta - as the royal standard, the king would have given his old symbol of royal authority a 'stately disposal'. The only other reference to the kunta in our chronicles is found in the Vamsatthappakāsinī where the commentary describes the siriya of the king as chattakontādi rājasirivibhaya.³ This also refers to the reign of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and shows how the kunta was already the emblem of royal authority before the time of Devānaṃpiya Tissa, when a new form of consecration was introduced from India as a result of which the kunta was replaced by the chatra.⁴ In other parts of the world as well, the chatra was preceded by more warlike regalia as the emblem of royal authority.⁵

After this there is no reference in our sources to the yaṭṭhi or kunta in this capacity. The only reference to the staff (yaṭṭhi) comes in the reign of Yasalālaka Tissa,⁶ where the yaṭṭhi is not the emblem of royal authority but the sceptre of authority of the dovārika, one of the most powerful officers

1. Mv.26.11-18

2. See above, p. 38

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.569, L1.20-21

4. Quaritch Wales points out that since neither the Aitareya nor the Śatapata Brāhmaṇa mentions the chatra in connexion with the royal consecration, it might have been introduced to India from Persia about the time of Aśoka. Siamese State Ceremonies.p.95

5. SSC.p.95

6. Mv.35.53

of the court in early Ceylon.¹ Hence we must conclude that the yatṭhi had lost all its significance as the royal standard by the time of Yasalālaka Tissa. Thus, if there is any substance in the reference to the consecration ceremony of the rulers of Ceylon before the time of Tissa, it was a simple ritual of taking a staff in hand, which Ceylon seemed to have shared with primitive societies. This explains why Tissa sent gifts to the Indian emperor asking for a consecration.

The action of Aśoka in conferring high dignities on the envoys sent by the Sinhalese ruler² sheds further light on the relationship of these two rulers. On the one hand this implies that the position of the Sinhalese ruler was inferior to the Indian king. On the other hand, it suggests that before that time the Sinhalese royal court was at a rudimentary stage and that it was at this time that the Indian type of royal court with its hierarchical organisation was introduced into the Island. Finally, it was the dignitaries appointed by Aśoka who performed the coronation ceremony of Devānampiya Tissa. The whole episode sounds more like an investiture of a subordinate ruler by his paramount sovereign than the mutual exchange of civilities between two friendly kings.

It is to be noted that devānampiya, the name given to Tissa in the chronicle, is the term by which Aśoka is invariably known in his inscriptions.³ Now the question arises as to how this term came to be applied to the contemporary of Aśoka in Ceylon. Paranavitana suggests that the Indian emperor may have allowed his own title to be used by the Sinhalese ruler after

1. See below, pp. 160 ff

2. Mv. 11.25-26

3. See below, pp. 72-3

the performance of the consecration ceremony.¹ C.W. Nicholas, who is rather sceptical about the whole story of the relationship of Aśoka to Devānampiya Tissa's coronation, remarks that Devānampiya Tissa might have imitated the title of the great Indian emperor.² It is doubtful whether Aśoka would have conferred the title he held on a ruler who was humble enough to supplicate a consecration ceremony at his hands. Hence it is more likely that the Sinhalese ruler himself assumed the title in imitation of his benefactor.

Among other less conspicuous aspects of this ceremony which also helped to transform local leadership into full-fledged kingship, the consecration of the queen along with the king comes first. Tradition has it that Vijaya would not agree to be consecrated king unless a Kṣatriya maiden was consecrated with him.³ Paṇḍuvāsudeva was consecrated only after the arrival of Bhaddakaccānā.⁴ Paṇḍukābhaya was consecrated with Suvaṇṇapālī.⁵ Although these references fall within the legendary period of our history the important fact to be noted is that by the time the tradition was written down it was accepted that no consecration ceremony of the king was complete unless the queen was consecrated along with him. Inscriptional evidence just outside our period confirms that this had become the established custom by that time. The Anuradhapura slab inscription of the time of Khudda Pārinda uses the word biseva to denote the queen. This is derived from Skt. abhiṣiktā meaning one who is consecrated.⁶

1. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936, pp.456-457

2. UCR.VII.pp.241-242

3. Mv.7.46

4. Mv.8.17,26-27

5. Mv.10.78

6. EZ.IV.p.112

Hence by the time the inscription was engraved the custom of the queen being consecrated along with the king was fully recognised.

The real significance of this custom is that it helped to establish in the Island the principle of lineal succession. Since the early leaders of Ceylon, the gamanis, were warlike leaders, it is doubtful whether there was any hereditary principle attached to the leadership. Pliny writes in his Historia Naturalis that the king of Ceylon should be childless and if he gets children after his election he should abdicate 'lest the throne should become hereditary'.¹ Although Pliny is not very reliable regarding Ceylon, this may be taken as indirect evidence showing at least some distant memories of a leadership which was not hereditary. In India and wherever Indian culture spread the investiture of the queen along with the king was regarded as a spiritual marriage in consequence of which the queen was raised to royal status,² thus giving the progeny a right to what their parents owned.

The consecration of the ruler with his wife would thus have imparted considerable importance not only to the ruler but to his progeny as well. By the time of Dhātusena this principle was so advanced that only the sons of consecrated queens could claim any right to the throne.³ The Sammohavinodanī defines 'kumāra' as one who was born in the womb of a consecrated queen to a consecrated king.⁴

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1. J.W. M'Crindle, Ancient India As described in Classical Literature. Westminster. 1901.p.106
 2. SSC.pp.116-117
 3. Cv.38.80-115; 39.1-31
 4. Sammohavinodanī. p.518

Various minor ceremonies which formed parts of the consecration of the king show how new ideas were brought to the Island with that ceremony and how they affected the development of sovereignty in the Island.

On two occasions the Mahāvamsa states that the king held a water ceremony at the end of the coronation. That this was not a glorified bath but a traditional ceremony performed according to all the formalities of the royal office is apparent from the chronicle. King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, records the chronicle, went to the Tissa tank for water festivals after his consecration ceremony at Anuradhapura in order to observe the traditions of the crowned kings. The Tissa Tank was adorned as befitting the occasion.¹ The king spent the whole day in water sports and asked the kontadhārakas to bring kunta so that he might retire from water sports;² we have already shown that the kunta formed the royal standard at an earlier period.³ These factors all suggest that this water ceremony was a part of the consecration ceremony and was performed with all the royal formalities. The Vamsatthappakāsinī is more specific about this, stating that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī went to the Tissa tank for two reasons i.e., to enjoy water sports and to preserve the customs of the consecrated kings.⁴ Once again we hear of this ceremony in the reign of Ilanāga, who, after vanquishing the Lambakaṇṇas, who took up arms against him, raised the parasol of sovereignty and went to the Tissa tank for water festivals. The Mahāvamsa account of how the king adorned himself when he was to retire from the water sports shows that this was done

1. Mv.26.6-7

2. Mv.26.8-10

3. See above, pp. 39 ff

4. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.495, L1.10-13

with all the formalities of the royal office.¹ These two instances show that the consecration ceremony ended with a formal water festival.

The importance of water festivities in ancient societies cannot be minimised. This festivity was connected with a fertility cult and was carried out to obtain substantial rainfall among agricultural communities.² Moreover, man was considered essentially impure and by coming into contact with water he became purified.³ Therefore the water ceremony was carried out as a natural means of washing away material or spiritual pollution. In some ancient communities a warrior who killed an enemy was made to take a ceremonial bath for purification.⁴ It may be pointed out that both Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and Ilanāga were warriors consecrated after their victory in war.

The Vaṃsatthappakāsinī states that the water was poured on the king three times by three different persons. First, it was done by a Kṣatriya maiden, then by the purohita and finally by the seṭṭhi;⁵ these three persons uttered the statement that the king was consecrated and made mahārāja by these three sections of society, namely the Khattiyas (Skt. Kṣatriyas) the Brahmanas and the gahapatis (Skt. grahapatis - householders).⁶ Paranavitana suggests that this aspect of the ceremony represents the election of the king by the three main groups of the people, the ruling class, the priest and the commoner at an earlier date.⁷

1. Mv.35.38-39, see also note 1, of Geiger's translation of the Mahāvamsa, p.249

2. Ency.Rel.Eth. Vol.12, p.705

3. Śatapata Brāhmaṇa. I.1.1.1

4. Ency.Rel.Eth. Vol.12.p.706

5. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. pp.305-306

6. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. pp.305-306

7. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.230

The Vamsatthappakāsinī states that the three representatives of the Ksatriyas, the Brahmanas, and the grahapatis express their desire that the king may protect them as a father protects his children and at the same time a curse is implicitly called down on those who fall short of this wish.¹ This same idea is expressed in the Aggañña Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya in which the Buddhist concept of kingship is expounded: here it is said that the king was an elective of the people (mahāsammata or mahājanasammata) and was expected to protect them.² Hence this part of the ceremony could be regarded as showing how Indian, particularly Buddhist, theories of kingship were introduced into the Island rather than representing an earlier stage of election of monarchy. The Buddhist colouring given to this essentially Hindu ceremony is also apparent in the description found in the Vamsatthappakāsinī about the way in which the vessels used at the coronation were made. For the text states that clay should be taken from eight specific places which were all connected with Buddhist worship in Ceylon.³ In the corresponding Hindu ceremony these vessels were made of palāsa (*butea frondosa*), udumbara (*ficus glomerata*), nyagrodha (*ficus Indica*) and asvatta (*ficus religiosa*) wood.⁴ Another important point is that the first person to pour water on the king's head is a Kṣatriya maiden (Khattiyakaññā)⁵

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī. pp.305-306

2. Dīgha Nikāya III.pp.92-93, The idea of the king protecting the people is not only a Buddhist idea, but is found in the Hindu law books as well. But the important point to be stressed is that according to the Śatapata Brāhmaṇa the king's consecration was announced and approved only by priests and nobles while commoners are not mentioned. (Śatapata Brāhmaṇa, V.3.5.32-33)

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.307, L1.5-8

4. Śatapata Brāhmaṇa. v.3.5.10-14

5. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.305, L1.16-20

which is another deviation from the Hindu ceremony. Perhaps the maiden represented the idea of purity of royal office. Thus the ceremony introduced lofty ideas of the king's responsibility towards his subjects and the purity of his office, ideas which are found in the Buddhist canon and Hindu law books.

In India the abhiṣeka indicated the attainment of power. The Śatapata Brāhmaṇa states that by consecration he becomes Prajāpati (Lord of Creatures) and was bestowed with great power.¹ By performing the Rājasūya sacrifice the king was invested with supreme power over the mankind by the grace of various gods such as Sāvitrī, Agni, Soma, Rudra, Mitra, Varuna and Indra.² The Mahābhārata states the abhiṣeka of a king was one of the most essential matters for any country.³ Although Buddhism had checked the tendency of kings of Ceylon to assume divine status, there is little doubt that such high notions about kings and consecration found their way to the Island with the Indian type of coronation. Although many features of the Indian coronation ceremony, such as animal sacrifice, which would have come into direct conflict with Buddhist ideologies, must have been absent in the ceremony introduced by Aśoka, who was himself a protagonist of ahimsā, the abhiṣeka differed very little from the Indian ceremony. Fa Hien who visited the Island in the 5th century A.D. states that the kings of Ceylon did their purification ceremonies according to Hindu custom.⁴ Therefore, the abhiṣeka, let alone other minor rites, must have remained basically a Brahmanical rite.

1. Śatapata Brāhmaṇa.v.3.4.23,-.27-8

2. Śatapata Brāhmaṇa.v.3.3.1-15

3. Mahābhārata. Śāntiparvan.XII.67.2

4. S.Beal, Buddhist Records of the Western World. lxxiv

There was sufficient reason for the rulers to maintain Brahmanical rites in their court ceremonies, for whereas Buddhism merely tolerated kings as protectors of the social order, Hinduism with its pomp and pageantry raised it to an almost quasi-divine status.¹

Although the kings of Ceylon were not regarded as divine beings they were no longer considered mere mortals. It was believed that a devatā (genie) abided on the chatra of the king and was ever watchful to see that the king did not stray from his duties.² (It is important to note here that the chatra was one of the five articles which constituted the regalia sent by Aśoka and has become the emblem of royal authority ever since).³ King Vaṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya, it may be inferred, took the title pitirāja⁴ because he considered himself to be the equivalent of Yama.⁵ The worship of dead kings is recorded in our sources. At the place where Elāra fell a shrine house (paṭimāghara) was built which was still venerated even when the Mahāvamsa was composed.⁶ The site of the Dakkhiṇa thūpa has been identified as the place where Dutthagāmaṇi's remains were interred.⁷ Gajabāhu was regarded by later generations as a god, and a Vihara was built at the place where the body of Sirisanghabodhi was cremated.⁸

1. SSC.p.3

2. Mv.28.6; Ssvp.pp.22,33,68,172,173,174, The idea of a protective genie residing in the state umbrella is also known in Siam. SSC.p.93

3. Cata lagitaka or raising of the umbrella became the standard phrase used to denote the accession of a ruler. EZ.III.p.177

4. Mv.33.36

5. Parānavitana, The God of Adam's Peak.pp.61-67

6. Mv.25.72-74; Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.483, L,10

7. UHC.I.Pt.1.p. 163

8. AC.p.153; Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.671 L1.7-9

Mahāsena is still worshipped as the god of Minneri (Minneriya deviyo).¹ Kings were considered to have rājiddhi or supernormal royal powers.² Such ideas must have started with the consecration ceremony of Devānaṃpiya Tissa. In fact the Dīpavaṃsa states that rāja iddhis came to Devānaṃpiya Tissa when he was consecrated.³ This is the starting point of the still higher status attained by the kings at a later date.

Royal status became impossible without consecration. The Sammohavinodanī states 'rājāno ti' muddhāvasittakhattiyā - kings mean the Kṣatriyas who were consecrated,⁴ and the Sumangalavilāsinī says rājānoti abhisittā - kings mean those who were consecrated.⁵ Thus the consecration ceremony of Devānaṃpiya Tissa at the 'request' of Aśoka accelerated the transition from local leadership to kingship. First, the recognition given to the Anuradhapura ruler by the powerful Indian monarch must have made a deep impression on the other petty leaders of the country. The introduction of this glamorous ceremony to the Anuradhapura court in place of the early ritual to indicate the accession of a new ruler must

1. Brohier, Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon. Pt.1.p.20

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.555, L1.26-29

3. Dv.17.79, The reference is to the first consecration of Devānaṃpiya Tissa, but no doubt this represents the new ideas brought with the consecration performed by the instructions of Aśoka.

4. Sammohavinodanī. p.518

5. Sumangalavi^{lā}sinī. p.924

have added to the growing prestige of the Anuradhapura ruler. Second, the appointment of high dignitaries of the court indicates that this was the beginning of a formal court in the Island, as well as the starting point of the hierarchical administrative machinery which developed later. Third, the consecration ceremony helped to attach a dynastic basis to the rule in the Island which seems to have been absent at an earlier date. Fourth, along with the consecration ceremony various high notions of kingship made their way to Ceylon, and, though somewhat modified to suit Buddhist ideologies, they nevertheless exerted a powerful influence on the institution of kingship. All these factors so transformed leadership that by the early centuries of the Christian era when the tradition was written down it had been so developed that its humble origin in the dim past was completely forgotten.

CHAPTER II

The Royal Titles and their Significance

Kings in ancient Ceylon were invested with various titles in their lithic records. The literary sources too abound in such terms. The study of these titles, a prerequisite for the proper understanding of kingship, begins here with the division into two separate periods i.e., before and after the first century A.D. This division is made not only because some of the early titles went out of vogue and new ones came into being after the first century but also because there is a difference in the use of the titles which were continued from the earlier period.¹

Among the titles raja seems to have been taken by almost all the kings except Saddhā Tissa who is always referred to as maharaja with or without the additional titles of gamani or devanapiya.² Thus Duṭṭhagāmaṇi,³ Lajji Tissa,⁴ Mahācūlika Mahātissa,⁵ Tissa,⁶ Kuṭakappa Tissa,⁷ Bhātika Abhaya,⁸

1. One of the earliest titles, gamani and the semi-title and name Abhaya are not discussed here as they have been already dealt with.
2. The inscriptions referring to Devānappiya Tissa and the inscription of raja Uti are not taken into account because of the uncertainties about their identity, See below. pp. 70 ff.
3. JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.136-137 No.3 (1)
4. CALR.III.p.205 No.2
5. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131 (42)
6. CJSG.II.p.179,p.218 (700); Nicholas identifies Devanapiya Tisa raja with Tissa. See, UCR.VII.p.243 and note 8 to p.238
7. CJSG.II.p.150, note 1
8. AIC.p.74, No.17

Mahadāṭhika Mahānāga,¹ Āmaṇḍagāmanī Abhaya,² and Ilanāga³ are given this title in their respective inscriptions. The chronicles inform us that all these rulers reigned as sovereign kings and, therefore, one may conclude that the term raja was taken by the supreme kings of the Island.

However this title was not confined to the sovereign rulers. It was taken by a number of rulers who flourished in the Island in the last few centuries B.C., and none of these can be identified with the kings given in the chronicles. Thus one of the inscriptions at Mihintale refers to Kanagama raja.⁴ Kanagama may be the place where this king ruled.⁵ Two inscriptions from Olagaṃgala, sixteen miles from Bibile in the Ūva Province, contain references to a raja Siva,⁶ possibly a minor potentate of that area. One of the epigraphs refers to a raja Siva, his son aya Siva and his grandson also aya Siva. The other inscription from the same place refers to raja Siva alone.⁷ A few inscriptions at Āṃbulam̐be, Central Province, refer to a king called Pacina raja.⁸ In some of these inscriptions

1. CJSG.II.p.150, note.1

2. CJSG.II.p.150, note.1

3. AIC.p.73, No.4

4. ASCAR.1911-12.p.95, No.11(ii); revised, EZ.V.p.213(14); UCR.VII.p.240

5. Paranavitana's equation of Kanagama with a place named Kanagama in Rohana is based on little fact.
See, EZ.V.pp.233-234

6. ASCAR.1952.G 41, Nos.9,10

7. ASCAR.1952.G 41, No.9

8. AIC.p.35. No.34, revised, UCR.VII.p.240

a son of Pacina raja named raja Aba and his son Tisa aya are mentioned. The Baṃbaragala inscription near Teldeniya mentions Pocani raja Naga and his wife daughter of a Brahmana.¹ It is not easy to decide whether this Pacina raja and Pocani raja refer to the same person or whether there were many kings who lived in this area taking the title Pocani or Pacina (Skt. Prācīna) meaning the king of the East. An inscription at Henannegala in the southern part of the Eastern Province, mentions Gamani Tisa, Majhima raja and Gamani.² Parker's identification of this Majhima raja with Vaṭṭhagāmanī in his concealment³ is untenable as no inscription definitely identified as his and no literary record show him to have been known by that name.

The well known inscriptions of Bovattegala and Kusalānakāṇḍa come next. At Bovattegala in Pānam Pattu area inscriptions refer to an aya Abaya, son of raja Uti, the raja Uti being a son of a gamani.⁴ Another inscription from the same place contains an epigraph of Mahatisa aya whose lineage is traced through Damaraja to dasabatikas or ten brothers and then to a gamani.⁵ In the Kusalānakāṇḍa inscriptions a certain gamani Abhaya claims to be the son of raja Abaya who in turn is the son of uparāja Naga.⁶ This uparaja Naga cannot be identified with uparāja Mahānāga of the chronicles, because Mahānāga's son and successor is Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa and not a ruler named Abhaya.⁷ Although it

1. ASCAR.1935. J 10 (42)

2. AC.p.446(67)

3. AC.p.446

4. CJSG.II.p.115 (465)

5. CJSG.II.pp.99-100,pp.175-176, note 2 to p.99

6. AC.p.445 (66), revised.UCR.VII.p.240

7. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

could be argued that this may be another son of Mahānāga it is more likely that this was a separate and independent royal house ruling in this part of Rohana in the second century B.C.¹ Perhaps we are dealing here with that independent dynasty of Kataragama kings whose distinctive symbol is a fish² and who ruled over a part of Rohana in the second century B.C.³ Quite close to Kusalānakañḍa, the Kaludupotāna Malai inscription of Erāvur Pattu in the Eastern Province refers to the reign of the son of aya Abaya (ayabaya rajayasi).⁴ The aya Abaya has been identified with raja Abaya of Kusalānakañḍa.⁵ Paranavitana suggests the possibility of the two rajas mentioned in the Periyapuliyankulaṃ inscription being local rulers.⁶

Thus the epigraphical evidence is overwhelming in pointing out that the title raja did not necessarily denote sovereignty over the whole Island whenever it was used in the inscriptions, at least during the early centuries B.C. It was taken by petty rulers who had their principalities, sometimes remote and at other times not very far from the capital, with authority confined to their immediate neighbourhood. From the above evidence, one might be tempted to draw the conclusion that in ancient Ceylon the title raja indicated an independent ruler, whether claiming overlordship over the whole Island (which they

1. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

2. EZ.V.pp229,233

3. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145; CJSG.II.pp.99-100,pp.175-176.
But Paranavitana identifies this uparaja Naga with Mahānāga, explaining the discrepancy of his son being Abhaya and not Tissa, by assuming that Goṭṭhābhaya is not a son of Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa but a brother of the same king, and, therefore, son of Mahānāga. (UHC.I.Pt.1.p.154)

4. ASCAR.1933.J 19,(84); Text,UCR.VII.p.240

5. UCR.VII.p.240

6. EZ.V.pp.250-251

actually did not exercise), or ruling within a limited locality.

But this was not always the case. We have already seen that some descendants of the dasabatikas were known as rajas. The dasabatikas were contemporaries of Goṭhābhaya and had been slain by the latter;¹ therefore the grandchildren of the dasabatikas might have belonged to the same generation as Duṭṭhagāmaṇi because he was the grandson of Goṭhābhaya.² Duṭṭhagāmaṇi exercised supreme authority over the whole Island, yet some of the dasabatikas' descendants used the title of raja. Therefore it appears that even after the dasabatikas had been defeated and the area annexed³ to the kingdom of Mahāgāma some of their descendants had considerable power, and it is reasonable to assume that Goṭhābhaya allowed the surviving head of the family to retain the title raja with perhaps some authority in subordination to his own.⁴ The Yaṭṭahalena inscription of Beligal Korale in Kegalle District mentions a gamani who was a descendant of raja Dusatara, a brother of Devanapiya.⁵ This inscription indicates that a branch of the Sinhalese royal family had established itself, probably in the capacity of subordinate rulers, in the area now forming Kegalle District.⁶ Although this Devanapiya cannot be identified with certainty it may be that the ruler intended is none other than

1. Dhātuvamsa. pp.18 f.

2. Mv.22.11,71

3. Goṭhābhaya built 'five hundred viharas' probably because he was trying to appease the subjects of the annexed kingdom. See, UHC.I.Pt.1.p.146 f

4. CJSG.II.p.176

5. CJSG.II.p.203 (618)

6. CJSG.II.p.177

Devānaṃpiya Tissa himself.¹ Local tradition² identifies Yaṭṭahalena Vihara where the epigraph is found as the place where a son was born to the consort of uparāja Mahānaga, on his flight from Anuradhapura.³ Parānavitana suggests the possibility that the raja Uti mentioned in the Periyapuliyankulam inscription refers to Uttiya as a local ruler and not as the sovereign king at Anuradhapura.⁴ Thus the evidence is that the princes related to the main line of rulers and governing various parts of the Island took the title raja.

L.S.Perera proposes two alternative solutions to the problem presented by local rulers calling themselves rajas; either they were related to the Anuradhapura dynasty or they were sufficiently powerful not to care.⁵ But we must modify this proposition slightly in the light of the evidence. Some of the local rajas may well have been related to the main line of rulers by blood. There may have been others who were conquered by the Anuradhapura rulers, but were allowed to retain some of their powers in subordination. But some of the local rajas may well have been independent rulers within their limited localities, having little or no connexion with the Anuradhapura kings.

1. CJSG.II.p.177

2. CJSG.II.p.177

3. Mv.22.7

4. EZ.V.pp250-251

5. IACI.I.p.35

Thus in the early days the title raja was used in three different meanings. First it indicated a sovereign ruler, at least in theory, over the whole Island, when applied to the main line of rulers at Anuradhapura. Secondly, it indicated independent authority within a limited locality. And finally, a subordinate ruler, with nominal allegiance to the main line of kings to whom such rulers were probably related by blood. The degree of subordination of such rulers may have varied in direct ratio to the distance from Anuradhapura and the degree of their power relative to the sovereign king. On the whole they may have been acting as independent rulers at a time when the central government had not yet developed means of coercing local rulers and communications were at a rudimentary stage. One important observation to be made is that the title raja always indicated some form of rule whether dependent, semi-dependent or independent. It was never applied to a member of a royal family unless he exercised some kind of rule. Otherwise such princes were called aya.¹

The more important and pretentious title used by the rulers of this period is maharaja. This literally means 'the great king' or 'chief of kings'. All but two kings who are given this title in lithic records have been identified with kings who ruled at Anuradhapura. Thus Devānampiya Tissa,² Uttiya,³ Duṭṭhagāmanī,⁴

1. See below. p. 101

2. EZ.V.p.210(2), p.217(31), pp.231-232

3. EZ.V.p.217(34), p.220(46,47)

4. AIC.p.73, No.1; JRAS.CB. XXXVI.No.98.p.60

Saddhā Tissa,¹ Lajji Tissa,² Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya,³ Mahācūlika Mahātissa,⁴ Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa,⁵ Bhātika Abhaya⁶ and Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga⁷ to whom this title is given in the inscriptions have been identified. Hence we may conclude that maharaja is the title given to sovereign kings in this period.

The two exceptions are a first century inscription at Karaṇḍahela⁸ which styles Kākavaṇṇa Tissa as maharaja and the Rūgam inscription⁹ which calls Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa maharaja. Neither of these monarchs ascended the throne of Anuradhapura or ruled over the whole kingdom. However the Karaṇḍahela inscription was incised two hundred years after the demise of Kākavaṇṇa Tissa and the Rūgam inscription five centuries after the time of Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa. In the case of the inscription referring to Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa, it may be said that by the time that the inscription was incised the title maharaja was

1. EZ.I.p.144 (1); EZ.V.p.211(4), p.232

2. EZ.I.p.148; EZ.V.pp.412-418(15)

3. CJSG.II.p.126(529); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131(42)

4. EZ.I.pp.61-62; EZ.III.p.154

5. EZ.I.pp.61-62; EZ.V.pp.252-258, Nos.1-11.

See, EZ.III.p.156 for correct identification of the kings mentioned in the EZ.I.pp.61-62

6. UCR.VII.p.238, note 7

7. EZ.I.pp.61-62, corrected EZ.III.p.156

8. UCR.VII.p.238

9. AIC.p.75, No.24

applied even to the local independent rulers.¹ The person who caused the inscription to be engraved may well have been influenced by contemporary practices. The other which gives the title maharaja to Kākavaṇṇa Tissa, may be explained in two different ways. It is either due to the prestige of his son Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya or, more probably, to the fact that during the time of Kākavaṇṇa Tissa, when there was no maharaja in the northern kingdom, he invested himself with this title. The Tamil leaders who occupied the dry zone may have accepted Elāra as their leader,² but there is no reason to believe that the Sinhalese king in Rohana acknowledged him as his overlord. Hence it is quite likely that in the absence of a maharaja in the northern territory Kākavaṇṇa Tissa assumed the more pretentious title.

It is to be noted that in some inscriptions where more than one king is mentioned, both raja and maharaja are used as their titles. Whether this practice of using raja and maharaja side by side in the same inscription to denote different kings suggests any difference in the significance of these terms deserves careful examination. In one of his own inscriptions at Riṭṭigala, Lajji Tissa gives the title maharaja to his father, Saddhā Tissa but neither of the titles is attached to his own name.³ In the Molahiṭṭiya Velegala inscription of Bhātika Abhaya, his grandfather Mahācūlika Mahātissa is called maharaja, but his own father Kuṭṭakaṇṇa Tissa is called raja.⁴ Bhātika Abhaya who

1. See below, pp. 83 ff.

2. The Mahāvamsa states that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī brought the Island under one banner after vanquishing 32 Tamil kings,
 Evaṃ dvattiṃsa Damilarājāno Duṭṭhagāmaṇī
 ganhitvā ekachattena Laṃkārajjaṃ akāsi so.
Mv.25.75

3. EZ.I.p.144 (1)

4. CALR.III.p.76 (1); EZ.III.p.154

caused the inscription to be engraved also takes the title raja.¹ In the Rātravela inscription Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga gives maharaja to his grandfather Mahācūlika Mahātissa but no title is given to his father Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa; he himself takes maharaja as his title.² The Line Malai inscription of the same king calls his grandfather maharaja but his father Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa and brother Bhātika Abhaya, whom he succeeded, raja, while he assumes the title of maharaja.³ The Ridīvihara inscription of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya terms his granduncle, Tissa, raja, but his grandfather and father, Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa and Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga, are called maharaja.⁴ He himself does not take any of these titles and is simply called Gamani Abhaya.⁵ Further the Saṇḍagiri Vehera inscription of Rohinika Gamani, the ruler of Rohana, names his grandfather, Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa maharaja but his father, Bhātika Abhaya, who was his overlord, only raja.⁶ This custom of giving different titles to different kings mentioned in the same inscription is not confined to royal documents alone. One of the inscriptions found at Koravakgala, near Situlpavuva, a private document, mentions

1. CALR.III.p.76(1); EZ.III.p.154

2. ASCAR.1934 J 18(71,iv); UCR.VII.p.243. note.51

3. UCR.VII.p.243. note 50

4. CJSG.II.p.179, p.218 (700), Nicholas identifies the Devanapiya Tisa raja of this inscription with Tissa, See, UCR.VII.p.243

5. CJSG.II.p.179, p.218 (700)

6. CJSG.II.pp.17-18, p.25 (398), Here the inscription is translated giving 'great king' to both the kings which seems to be a mistake.

Vatthagāmanī Abhaya as maharaja but his successor Mahācūlika Mahātissa as raja.¹

The use of the two terms side by side for different kings does not mean that the terms connoted different ranks of kings. For one reason the kings to whom maharaja is denied in these instances are given that title elsewhere. Lajji Tissa is called maharaja in three inscriptions, two at Riṭigala itself.² Kuṭakanna Tissa is called maharaja in no less than four records found at different places.³ Bhātika Abhaya to whom the title raja is given in the Molahiṭiya Velegala inscription is called maharaja at least in one inscription.⁴ Hence we may note that although there are instances where raja and maharaja are used side by side for different kings in the same inscription such instances do not indicate any difference in the status or in the power of such rulers whether in absolute terms or in relation to one another. If such a difference existed Lajji Tissa and Āmaṇḍagāmanī Abhaya would not have omitted to invest themselves with the more pretentious title which they so generously bestowed on their predecessors.

Another striking aspect of the use of the titles to denote different kings in the same inscription is that except on very rare occasions the foremost ancestor is given a more pretentious title than the immediate predecessor. The Rātravela, Molahiṭiya

1. ASCAR.1934. J 18, (71,iii); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131. (42)

2. EZ.I.p.148; EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

3. CJSG.II.pp.17-18, p.25 (398); CJSG.II.p.179, p.218 (700); EZ.I.pp.61-62, correct identification of kings EZ.III.p.156; EZ.V.pp.252-258, Nos.1-11;

4. At Dunumaṇḍalākaṇḍa. AIC.p.29, No.15. Muller's reading of this inscription (Ibid.p.74.) and the identification of kings are inaccurate.

Velegala, Saṇḍagiri Vehera, Line Malai and Koravakgala inscriptions could be cited as examples for this.¹ Even in the cases where the foremost ancestor is given raja and immediate predecessor maharaja the additional title devanapiya is given to the foremost ancestor, as in the case of the Ridīvihara inscription of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya.² Moreover in most of the inscriptions the additional title devanapiya is given to the foremost ancestor mentioned whether he is called raja or maharaja.³ This may have been done with an eye to enhancing the prestige of an ancestor, so that the descendants themselves automatically came into their share. L.S.Perera states that the two titles could be taken as interchangeable though maharaja would emphatically stress the sovereignty of the ruler.⁴ C.W.Nicholas points out that although the kings styled themselves maharaja in the majority of their inscriptions the two terms raja and maharaja were understood and used as synonyms.⁵ The above analysis confirms this.

It may be concluded therefore, that the title maharaja does not seem to indicate any difference in comparison with raja as applied to the kings of Anuradhapura. But with regard to raja as used by the local rulers it definitely had a different bearing. In such instances maharaja may have sharply distinguished the ruler of Anuradhapura from the local rajas, who were sometimes subordinate to the kings of Anuradhapura.

1. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142; EZ.III.p.154; CJSG.II.pp.17-18,p.25 (398); UCR.VII.p.243,note.50; JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131(42)

2. CJSG.II.p.179 (700), p.218 (700)

3. CJSG.II.p.179 (700), p.218 (700); EZ.I.pp.62-63; EZ.I.p.144; EZ.III.p.154; EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.133 (63); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142; UCR.VII.p.243, note.50.

4. IACI.I.p.35

5. UCR.VII.p.236

An appraisal of the significance of the term maharaja requires an analysis of its origin in the Island. The inscriptions give us little information regarding this aspect of the problem--and for two reasons. First, we see that the two terms raja and maharaja crop up simultaneously in the inscriptions and so do not warrant any conclusion regarding their relationship. This is made more difficult by the indiscriminate application of the title raja and maharaja by the rulers of Anuradhapura in their lithic records. If it could be said that maharaja is a natural development of raja one would have expected the sovereign kings of Anuradhapura to use the more pretentious title exclusively when they refer to themselves in the inscriptions. But as we have already seen this is not the case.

It has been suggested that the title maharaja was introduced to the Island from northwestern India. The fact that the Yavanas in northwestern India used the term maharaja while the Mauryas and Sātavāhanas took only raja is brought to support this supposition.¹ But the evidence at hand does not warrant such a conclusion, for Ceylon's direct connexions with the Yavanas cannot be pushed back as far as the third century B.C.

So far scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the titles given to kings in the chronicles and other literary sources because they considered that these were mainly based on the requirements of the metre and other poetical considerations.² This is indeed true to a certain extent, and clear instances may be drawn from the chronicles to illustrate this point.³ But a careful analysis of the

1. CHJ.I.No.3.p.170

2. CHJ.I.No.3.p.207

3. Mv.17.1; 31.117; 32.74; 18.59

terms applied to royalty in these documents reveals that poetical and other literary considerations were not the only factors which governed the choice of certain terms given to these rulers. Hence our attention is directed towards our four main sources for this period, the Dīpavaṃsa, the Samantapāsādikā, the Mahāvaṃsa and the Vamsatthappakāsinī.

Mahārāja is used in the Dīpavaṃsa only fifteen times.¹ Of these, five refer to Aśoka,² and two refer to cattāro mahārājā,³ indicating the four guardian deities. All the other instances apply to king Devānampiya Tissa whenever the king is addressed by the Elder Mahinda. There is only one exception to this rule, when the king is addressed by amaccas as mahārāja. But the next line of the verse contains the usual mode of addressing the king by the people, that of deva.⁴ This single exception seems to be the outcome of a 'literary consideration'.

In the Bāhiraṇidānavañṇanā of the Samantapāsādikā the term mahārāja is used nearly forty times when the king Devānampiya Tissa is addressed by the Elder Mahinda.⁵ Mahārāja is also used in more than twenty instances when the two Indian kings Ajātasattu and Dhammāsoka are addressed by the Sangha.⁶ It is very rarely used to

1. Dv.7.45; 12.51; 12.61; 12.73; 13.42; 13.59; 14.5; 15.4; 15.75; 15.87; 15.91; 15.93; 15.94; 16.13; 17.60

2. Dv.7.45; 15.87; 15.91; 15.93; 15.94

3. Dv.16.13; 17.60

4. Dv.12.73, See below. pp. 68-9

5. Smp.pp.77,78,81,82,83,85,88,90,100,101,102

6. Smp.pp.10,44,47,48,50,56,57,59,60,61

denote a king in the narrative and the contrast is striking when one notices how the word rāja is used continuously in the narrative while the word mahārāja appears repeatedly in the dialogue.

The Mahāvamsa also uses the title mahārāja very sparingly. It occurs in the chronicle a little more than fifty times. Aśoka is referred to as mahārāja twelve times, four times being so addressed by the Sangha.¹ Vijaya and Paṇḍuvāsudeva are each referred to as mahārāja, once.² Devānampiya Tissa is invested with this title seventeen times, nine of these referring to instances when the king is so addressed by the Sangha.³ The king Elāra is once addressed as mahārāja and the context does not permit us to be precise as to whether he is so addressed by the Sangha or by the amaccas.⁴ While the king Kākavanna Tissa is once referred to as mahārāja, the royal house of Rohana during his times is referred to as mahārājakula.⁵ Duṭṭhagāmanī is invested with the title sixteen times and four occasions refer to his being addressed by the Sangha.⁶ The compound cattāromahārājā also occurs twice in the chronicle.⁷ The term is found in the Mahāvamsa for the last time when it refers to Saddhā Tissa and Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya as mahārāja.⁸

1. Mv.4.33; 5.96; 5.177; 5.184; 5.236; 5.245; 5.251; 17.10; 17.11; 18.18; 18.59; 19.14

2. Mv.8.1; 9.12

3. Mv.13.13; 14.8; 14.26; 15.15; 15.20; 15.56; 15.63; 15.81; 15.115; 15.150; 15.166; 15.183; 17.1; 17.11; 19.75; 19.82;

4. Mv.21.25

5. Mv.22.59; 23.89

6. Mv.15.171; 24.41; 25.97; 25.106; 25.112; 26.10; 30.1; 30.55; 31.3; 31.87; 31.117; 31.122; 32.18; 32.26; 32.28; 32.74;

7. Mv.31.79; 30.89

8. Mv.33.14; 33.44

The Vamsatthappakāsinī uses the term mahārāja mainly when the king is addressed by the Sangha.¹ Another important point to be stressed is that the bulk of such references are confined to the reigns of Devānāpiya Tissa and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya. After the reign of the latter the term is used very rarely. The Vamsatthappakāsinī also uses the term on rare occasions to denote kings.

The above enumeration of the various uses of the term mahārāja in the literary sources brings to light some important points. It shows that the term may have been used in the original sources, the aṭṭhakathās, mainly when the king was addressed by the monks. The Samantapāsādikā, which according to scholars closely follows the original vinayaṭṭhakathā, uses this term only on such occasions, with some negligible exceptions. In the other prose work too, the term is used mainly for the same purpose. Of the two works in verse, the Dīpavaṃsa (the earlier work preserving the ancient tradition in its original form) uses the term for the same purpose. It is only in the Mahāvamsa that mahārāja is used to a considerable extent to denote kings. The possible explanation for this is that the two earlier works give the tradition as it was found in the aṭṭhakathās whereas the Mahāvamsa has changed it to suit its literary requirements such as metre and alliteration. It may also be possible that the Mahāvamsa was influenced by the practice of the time of its

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī. pp. 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 343, 345, 348, 367, 372, 373, 374, 377, 381, 389, 468, 470, 473, 524, 525, 526, 528, 529, 530, 551, 555, 556, 577, 578, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 596, 597, 598, 599, 636, 651, 681, 682

composition when the term mahārāja was commonly used to denote kings. In the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, too, the older tradition is more or less preserved since it is a prose work and there was hardly any necessity to change the wordings of the older documents for literary purposes.¹

Another point which leads to the same conclusion is that in the two prose works, the Samantapāsādikā and the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, only mahārāja is used when the king is addressed by the Sangha. But in the two works which are in verse, various other terms such as rāja, narissara, narinda, bhūmipa, and rathesabha are used for that purpose.² This suggests the idea that the original term used on such occasions, mahārāja, was sacrificed for the sake of metre and other poetical necessities.³

The usage of the word deva in the literary sources also support such an inference. In all these works, the Dīpavaṃsa,⁴ the Samantapāsādikā,⁵ the Mahāvāṃsa⁶ and the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī,⁷ deva occurs whenever the king is addressed by laymen. Deva is

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1. The Vaṃsatthappakāsinī belongs to a considerably later date and therefore the work does not seem to be so careful about the usage of the term mahārāja, which is sometimes used when the amaccas address the king, a usage hardly found in the other three works. Even so, about three fourths of the total occurrences of the term are for the purpose of having the king addressed by the Sangha.
 2. Mv.15.22;29,31,34,35,46,50,64,181,184; Dv.13.3;15.87
 3. For a clear example compare,
"ahaṃ eva bhante""sādhū tvaṃ paṇḍito 'si, narissarā" (Mv.14.21)
paṇḍito si narissarāti, evaṃ sati, "sādhū mahārāja, paṇḍito si"
ti rājānaṃ pasaṃsi. (Vaṃsatthappakāsinī.p.333, L1,5-6)
 4. Dv.12.73; 12.74; 14.56
 5. Smp.pp.49,51,54,56,79,80,82,91,92,93
 6. Mv.5.200; 6.23; 15.19; 18.5
 7. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī.pp.224,236,367,368,387,426,462,486.

never used in any literary work when the king is addressed by the Sangha. The absence of the word deva used as a term of reference to the kings by the Sangha in the Mahāvamsa which employs various other terms such as bhūmipa, narissara, rathesabha and mahārāja (to suit the metre) for that purpose, is very conspicuous. All this supports the argument that mahārāja was the term used by bhikkhūs in addressing the king as opposed to deva used by laymen. Wagle, who analysed the terms of reference in the Pali canon, arrived at a similar conclusion. He has pointed out that the Buddha and the Sangha addressed kings as mahārāja but the term deva was used by gahapatis (householders).¹ Perhaps the Sangha followed the same practice in Ceylon.

This enables us to explain why the term mahārāja came to be used in Ceylon before it became common in India.² The first theras may have addressed their patron Devānampiya Tissa as mahārāja. There are two possible explanations for the use of this particular term by the monks in addressing the king. Either the Sangha used the title mahārāja in order to please their first royal convert and the chief patron in the Island or the Sangha was compelled to use this term to distinguish the Anuradhapura ruler from other rajas of the Island.

The ruler of Anuradhapura was not the only king who came into contact with the early missionaries, for the Mahāvamsa itself refers to the attendance of the Kṣatriyas of Kataragama at the Bodhi

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1. Narendra Wagle, Society at the time of the Buddha. 1966. pp. 53-54, 60-61, 65
 2. There is no positive evidence that mahārāja was not used in India during this period. But the term does not occur in the inscriptions of Aśoka.

festival,¹ and inscriptions refer to Kataragama Kṣatriyas as rajas.² Since the Pali canon sets out the standard relationship of the Sangha towards laymen it is possible that the Sangha was merely using the standard terminology in addressing the king as mahārāja.³ The Anuradhapura kings seem to have given the term official recognition very soon, perhaps realising its value as a term indicating their superiority over the other rajas, by inscribing it on their official records. Thus the real reason for the kings' assumption of this title seems to have come from the Sangha, and the title therefore had no bearing on the power of the king.

The inscriptions belonging to the earliest part of our period also support this view. Maharaja is rarely found in inscriptions ascribed to a period before the time of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya. Although the attribution of these inscriptions to these rulers is by no means decisive it is worthwhile examining them in the light of what is said above. The four inscriptions referring to Devānampiya Tissa call the king only maharaja. They are: one by his wife,⁴ one by his wife's sister,⁵ one by his physician,⁶ and one by his teacher.⁷ All the inscriptions refer to Uttiya, the

1. Mv.19.54-55

2. The Kataragama Kṣatriyas are identified with the dasabatikas mentioned in the Bovattegala inscriptions. CJSG.II.pp.99 f

3. See above, p. 69

4. EZ.V.p.217 (31)

5. EZ.V.p.210 (2)

6. AIC.p.48, No. 84 revised text. UCR.VII.p.241, note.32

7. AIC.p.48, No. 84; revised text UCR.VII.p.241, note 32. All these inscriptions seem to be contemporary documents.

successor of Devānampiya Tissa, as maharaja.¹ The only exception to this rule is the Periyapuliyankulam Brahmi inscription referring to raja Uti who has been identified as a local ruler.² The inscriptions referring to Uttiya were engraved by order of the king, his wife, and his daughter, and therefore most probably belong to the king's reign. Hence it may be concluded that the contemporary inscriptions of these two monarchs style both as maharaja. It follows from this that before Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya the kings of Anuradhapura used only the epithet maharaja. After the unification of the Island by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, the local potentates were no longer called rajas.³ This may be the reason why the Anuradhapura kings after Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya were less insistent upon using the title maharaja in their inscriptions. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, whose authority was unchallenged after the conquest of the northern kingdom, is also called raja or Gamani Abhaya, although the title maharaja is also given to him.⁴

Saddhā Tissa was the only king of this period who seems to have been particular about the title given to him, and everywhere he is referred to as maharaja; being Duṭṭhagāmaṇī's successor he was perhaps too near the earlier period to be able to drop the title. Thus the title mahārāja introduced to the Island by Buddhist monks as a term of reference, and recognized by the rulers of Anuradhapura to indicate their overlordship at a time when they were asserting their authority over the local rajas, may have

1. EZ.V.pp.217-218 (34),p.220 (46-47)

2. EZ.V.p.250, see also, JCBRAS.NS.VI (Special Number)p.86

3. All the inscriptions mentioning rajas not related to the main line of kings are dated prior to the first century B.C.

4. ASCAR.1933. J 14(57), see ^{above}note 3, to p. 11
ASCAR. 1934. J 18 (71, ii); ASCAR. 1935 J.10 (41)

continued even after it was no longer necessary. This may explain why the two terms raja and maharaja were used side by side to indicate the overlordship of Anuradhapura kings after the time of Dutthagāmanī Abhaya.

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The Mahāvamsa gives Devānampiya Tissa as the name of the Sinhalese ruler who ascended the throne of Anuradhapura after Muṭṭasīva.¹ In one instance the Mahāvamsa states that his name is hidden in devānampiya (devānampiyavacanopagūlha nāmo).² The Vamsatthappakāsinī, commenting on this, states that the king's name is Tissa and this is hidden in the upapada of devānampiya.³ That work adds further that the king was known as Devānampiya by the people because he was bent on meritorious work leading to heavenly life.⁴ The fact that devānampiya is called an upapada suggests that it was taken by the king at a later date in his life and was not his original name.

However, the inscriptions reveal that devanapiya (P. devānampiya) was not confined to one ruler but was taken by most of the kings belonging to the first dynasty. Thus this term which is invariably used by Aśoka in his inscriptions⁵ is found in Ceylon in connexion with the royal house of Anuradhapura, beginning with Aśoka's contemporary in the Island, with whom he had diplomatic relations.⁶

1. Mv.11.6-7

2. Mv.11.42

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.310, Ll 8-10

4. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.310, Ll 11-13

5. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. I. pp.1 ff.

6. See above, pp. 33 ff.

In Aśokan inscriptions devanapiya is sometimes used as a synonym of rājan.¹ In the Khalsi, Shāhbazgārhi and Mānsīrā texts of the Rock Edict VIII the king's predecessors are called devānampiya and devānampriya while the Girnar and Dhauli versions have rājāno and lājāne.² Devānampiya in the Second Separate Edict at Dhauli corresponds to the lājā in the Jaugada text.³ According to the Mahābhāṣya, devanapiya is used as an honorific like bhavān, dīghāyu and āyusmān.⁴ The term was taken by the descendants of Aśoka, as is seen in the Nagaragiri Hill inscriptions where Daśaratha, one of the grandsons of Aśoka, is called devanapiya.⁵

A remarkable fact about the use of this title in Ceylon is that it is borne only by kings belonging to the main line at Anuradhapura. Thus Devānampiya Tissa,⁶ Uttiya,⁷ Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya,⁸ Saddhā Tissa,⁹

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1. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.I.p.XXX
 2. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.I.p.XXX
 3. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.I.p.XXX
 4. The Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya of Patāñjali, Ed. F.Kielhorn (Third Edition.) 1965.II. On Pāṇini.V.3.14.
 5. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.I.p.XXVIII
 6. EZ.V.p.210 (2), pp.231-232
 7. EZ.V.p.220 (46-47)
 8. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130 (21); ASCAR.1934. J 18 (71,ii)
 9. EZ.I.p.144 (1)

Lajji Tissa,¹ Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya,² Mahācūlika Mahātissa,³ Tissa,⁴ Kuṭakappa Tissa,⁵ and Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga⁶ are all rulers at Anuradhapura to whom this title was given. Opinion is divided as to how this title which was fostered by Aśoka came to be applied to the kings of Ceylon. Paranavitana suggests that the Indian emperor may have allowed Devānampiya Tissa to use his title when the latter was consecrated by the former.⁷ But Nicholas, who seems rather sceptical about the emperor Aśoka's connexion with the consecration of Devānampiya Tissa, states that Devānampiya Tissa may have imitated the title of Aśoka.⁸ Owing to the lack of any precise data no conclusive answer is possible.

Devanapiya occurs in the inscriptions in combination with all the other titles taken by the kings of Anuradhapura during this period, i.e. gamani raja, and maharaja. Only one published inscription uses devanapiya without any other title mentioned above.⁹ It occurs in fewer instances with raja than with maharaja.¹⁰ These instances indicate that the term devanapiya was given to kings irrespective of the other titles used in the inscriptions and hence had no organic connexion with the other terms applied to the kings.

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1. EZ.I.p.144(1); EZ.I.p.148(c)
 2. AC.p.444 (65)
 3. EZ.III.p.154; JCBRAS.NS.II.p.132(54)
 4. CJSG.II.p.179 (700), p.218 (700). See for a revised identification of the kings mentioned, UCR.VII.p.243
 5. EZ.V.pp.252-258 (1-10)
 6. EZ.I.pp.61-62, for correct identification of the rulers mentioned, See EZ.III.p.156
 7. See above, pp. 42-3
 8. UCR.VII.pp.241-242
 9. EZ.I.p.144(1), the second king mentioned in the inscription.
 10. In published inscriptions it occurs with raja only in three instances, ASCAR.1934.J 18(71,ii); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.132(54); CJSG.II.179 (700), p.218(700)

A more important conclusion is that this title was not used by the Anuradhapura kings after the extinction of the first dynasty at the end of the reign of Yasalālaka Tissa. Perhaps the title acquired a dynastic significance once it had been used for centuries by the royal house of Anuradhapura, and when that house came to an end the new dynasty would not use it any longer.¹ Devanapiya is applied to the earliest ancestor and not to the immediate predecessors, in most of the inscriptions.² This confirms the idea that, whatever the purpose of the introduction of the title at the time of Devānampiya Tissa, with the passage of time the dynastic aspect was more and more stressed.³ The Mīnvila inscription⁴ refers to the devanapiya kula, establishing thereby the increasing stress on the dynastic aspect of the title. Further more, the Yaṭṭahalena inscription⁵ of Beligal Korale refers to devanapiya presumably with no other purpose than to establish the connexion of that petty royal house with that of the Anuradhapura dynasty. In the Rātravela,⁶ Ridīvihāra,⁷ Molahiṭṭiya Velegala,⁸ and Line Malai⁹ inscriptions Mahācūlika Mahātissa and Tissa are called devanapiya but their immediate descendants are mentioned simply as raja or maharaja. The chronicles inform us that after Mahācūlika Mahātissa (and the short reign of Tissa) there was political confusion due to Anulā's infamous

1. UCR.VII.p.243

2. EZ.III.p.154; EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15); CJSG.II.p.179(700),p.218 (700); ASCAR.1934.J 18 (71,iv); EZ.I.p.148 (c); UCR.VII.p.243 note, 50

3. This may be one of the reasons why it was discarded at the end of the first dynasty.

4. EZ.III.p.156, note.5. Devanapiya kulahi Macuḍikaha puta Puṭakana Abayaha aḍi.

5. CJSG.II.p.177,p.203(618)

6. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142

7. CJSG.II.p.179(700),p.218 (700)

8. EZ.III.p.154

9. UCR.VII.p.243, note.50

career and the devanapiya kula was in danger of losing its claim to the throne.¹ Hence it is possible that the descendants of the devanapiya family were eager to prove that they belonged to that family by showing their connexion with Mahācūlika Mahātissa (and with Tissa) who had ruled before the country was thrown into confusion. Thus, although the title devanapiya may have carried some glamour and lustre during the time of Devānampiya Tissa, when the prestige of the Maurya empire was at its peak, once it had become a family name the title had no implication of power and prestige except those that were associated with the Anuradhapura royal house.

It seems that even before the dynasty of Devānampiya Tissa died out, the title had fallen into desuetude. No king after Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga seems to have used it. Among the numerous inscriptions which refer to Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga only one gives him the title devanapiya.² Nor do the inscriptions referring to Āmaṇḍagāmaṇī Abhaya or Ilanāga mention devanapiya.³ This may have been due to the denigration of the title in India. Even before the Christian era the term devanapiya (Skt. devānampriya) became a term of abuse in India.⁴ →

1. Mv. 34.15-27

2. EZ. I. pp. 61-62, for correct identification of the king,
See EZ. III. p. 156

3. CJSG. II. p. 150, note 1, p. 101(525), p. 126(525), p. 179(700),
p. 218(700); AIC. p. 74. No. 4

4. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. I. p. xxix

These ideas may have penetrated to Ceylon, which maintained some contact with the subcontinent after the introduction of Buddhism, and this may have been one of the reasons that the title was discarded by the members of the Devānampiya Tissa's house, if we take the absence of the title after Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga as positive evidence.

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Damaraja is another title used by some of the early kings. The Bovattegala inscription of Pānampattu, in the Eastern Province, belonging to the second century B.C. refers to a damaraja whose genealogy is traced to the dasabatikas (ten brothers), the sons of Gamani.¹ This damaraja's father is referred to as the 'eldest of all' (savajhete) of the ten brothers.² His son is referred to as Maha Tisa aya.³ Since aya and gamani are both titles given to members of royal families this damaraja must certainly have been of royal descent. As raja stood for rule, damaraja should therefore indicate some form of rule.

1. CJSG.II.pp.99-100,p.114 (462)

2. CJSG.II.pp.99-100,p.114 (462)

3. CJSG.II.p.99 see note 2 also, p.115 (466)

Not far away from Bovattegala are the fourteen inscriptions from Koṭṭādāmūhela which contain the same basic text with slight variations and refer to damaraja and his son Mahatisa aya.¹ These inscriptions also refer to a certain Tisa aya son of aya Abaya. This damaraja and the Mahatisa aya of the Koṭṭādāmūhela inscriptions are identical with the persons bearing the same names in the Bovattegala inscriptions.²

The term damaraja occurs in epigraphs not only in the Eastern Province but in Mihintale too. In one of these inscriptions, Gamani damaraja and his son aya Asalisa are mentioned.³ Parker identified this damaraja with Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya and Asali in the inscription with Sāliya, the son of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya according to the chronicles.⁴ He was led to this conclusion by the interpretation of damaraja (Skt. dharmarāja) as 'devout king' and the similarity of the name Asali with Sāliya.⁵ Bell has concurred,⁶ but Paranavitana contends that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is not given such a title in any historical work. Drawing attention to the fact that this same epithet is given to a certain ruler in the Bovattegala and Kusalānakāṇḍa inscriptions, Paranavitana further points out that the Mihintale inscription of a son of a damaraja has a symbol which is very similar to a symbol occurring in the Bovattegala

1. ASCAR.1934. J 21(78); Text, UCR.VII.p.239, Cf. also, UHC.I.Pt. I.pp.147-148, Sri Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume, pp.65-67
2. UCR.VII.p.239
3. EZ.V.p.213 (13)
4. Mv.33.1
5. AC.pp.443-444 (62)
6. ASCAR. 1910-11, note to p.22 and, ASCAR.1911-12 note to p.95

inscriptions. Thus he concludes that if these symbols could be taken as sign manuals of the two princes, the damaraja mentioned in the Mihintale inscription would have been a prince of Kataragama.¹ We may add in favour of this argument that since Kataragama Kṣatriyas attended the festival of the Bodhi tree the distance between the two places is no argument against the identification.² If this argument stands, the title damaraja is used only by Kataragama kings. We do not know whether this means that when there was a rivalry between the two royal houses of Rohana, (those of the family of Kataragama and a branch of the devanapiyakula headed by Goṭhābhaya)³ the Kataragama royal house tried to acquire some glamour and to win the favour of their subjects by giving a religious colouring to their title. This may have been a reaction against the term devanapiya taken by the Anuradhapura dynasty, which had made great headway since Devānampiya Tissa had become the chief patron of Sangha in the Island.⁴ It is evident from the attendance of Kataragama Kṣatriyas at the Bodhi festival that they were among the earliest to patronize the new faith. When the Dhātuvamsa states that Goṭhābhaya built five hundred Viharas to expiate the sins of killing the Kṣatriyas of Kataragama⁵ this may well indicate an attempt to reconcile the alienated subjects of an avowedly Buddhist king. That the title is

1. EZ.V.p.233, see for illustrations of the symbols, p.229

2. Mv.19.54-55

3. Dhātuvamsa.p.18, Cf. also, UHC.I.Pt.I.pp.145-148

4. See below, p. 233

5. Dhātuvamsa. p.18, Cf. also, UHC.I.Pt.I.pp.145-148

confined to the Kataragama family is further confirmed by the fact that it was not adopted by any of the later rulers. It may have died out with the Kataragama family.

Nevertheless, the other possibility propounded by Parker, i.e., that the title was taken by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī cannot be discarded; we notice that at least one literary work refers to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī as dharmarāja.¹ Paranavitana contends that the member of the Kataragama family who took the title damaraja was a worshipper of Yama. damaraja equated with dharmarāja, one of the epithets of Yama.² However in the Pali canon this term is used to describe the qualities of a cakkavattirāja. His power is absolute and is described in the standard phrase dhammiko dhamma-rājā cāturato vijitāvī janapadathāvariya-ppatto satta-ratana samannāgato.³ Even after giving full consideration to the exaggerations of the monks in the chronicles, this seems to have been the aspiration of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. The Samantapāsādikā uses this term in the compound Asokadhammarājā to denote Aśoka.⁴ Although Aśoka is not given this title in any of his inscriptions it follows from this example that the cleric in Ceylon used the title in referring to him, and this may have inspired some of the early monarchs to invest themselves with the title damaraja. It may be observed that some of the early foreign rulers of Northwestern India who

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.570, "mahārāja Tambapannidīpe Duṭṭhagāmaṇiabhaya mahārājā nāma dhammiko dhammarājā."

2. Paranavitana, The God of Adam's Peak.pp.65 ff

3. Dīgha Nikāya III.p.59

4. Snp.pp.46,52,74

were converted to Buddhism took dhramika, a term equivalent to dharmarāja as one of their titles.¹ But the title was not confined to Buddhists alone, for it was found among the Kadamba rulers as dharmamahārāja.²

Diparaja is a term used in one of the Brahmi inscriptions found at Mihintale.³ It refers to the father of a chief princess (mahabiya) who made a donation. The term literally means 'king of the Island' (Skt. dvīparāja). The Sammohavinodanī mentions a diparaja who was the ruler of Nāgadīpa; the king of Anuradhapura appointed to this position his son who was blind in one eye as he could not appoint a blind person to the throne of Anuradhapura.⁴ The source does not state the name of the king and so it is possible that there were several kings who held this title of diparaja at different times. Whether or not diparaja indicated simply a title or an office is not certain, but the fact that a blind person held it favours the former possibility.

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As a prelude to the study of royal titles after the first century, it may be observed that the first century A.D. saw the end of the devanapiya kula which had ruled the Island for over three centuries.⁵ The usurper who put an end to the royal house of Anuradhapura could retain his position only for six years until

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1. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. II.Pt.I.p.xxviii
'dhramika = righteous'
 2. Epigraphia Indica. VIII.p.30, p.147
 3. EZ.V.p.218 (37)
 4. Sammohavinodanī. p.443-444
 5. UHC.I.Pt.I.p.177 ff

he was deposed by Vasabha. The line of Vasabha held power in the Island for centuries to come, and it was during this period that the mandate of Anuradhapura rulers extended to other parts of the Island, and even the farthest corners of the country were brought under the central authority.¹

One of the popular royal titles, gamani, fell into disuse after Gajabāhu, the third king of Vasabha's line. Only the inscriptions of Gajabāhu use this title and in fact the chronicle also calls him Gajabāhuka Gāmanī.² Perhaps he was only trying to revive an old title which carried with it ideas that were in harmony with the personal inclinations of this warlike king.³

Raja is found in fewer inscriptions and this may imply that the title lost much of its popularity. But the circumstances in which the term was used indicate that it had the same meaning as maharaja whenever it was used. This is confirmed by an inscription of Gajabāhu in which the king re-grants a donation to a monastery made by Sabha, the usurper. In this inscription Gajabāhu mentions his ancestry and both Vasabha and Vankanāsika Tissa as well as the king himself are called raja; Sabha the usurper is also given the title raja.⁴ Sabha is unique in one respect, for all the other kings of Anuradhapura before and after him were called maharaja in some of the records referring to them whereas Sabha was called only raja.⁵ But this is no indication that Sabha was a

1. See below, pp. 244 ff.

2. ASC.SPR.1896.p.58 No.57; EZ.I.p.211; EZ.III.pp.116,166
CALR.III.p.215 (12); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (65); Mv.35.115

3. Rājāvaliya.pp.33-34; UHC.I.Pt.I.pp.182-185

4. EZ.III.p.166

5. EZ.III.pp.162,165,166

less powerful ruler than the others who are credited with maharaja. We find that Vasabha, Vankanāsika Tissa, and Gajabāhu are all termed raja in the same record along with Sabha,¹ and, had raja indicated any lower status this would not have been done. However, raja rarely stands on its own as a royal title after Gajabāhu. In a very few cases it is used as a royal title along with sirimeka or apaya, and published inscriptions show only two such instances - those referring to Goṭhābhaya as raja mekavana apaya.²

Maharaja also appears to have undergone some changes during this period. We have seen that maharaja always indicated overlordship over the whole Island during the earlier period.³ This is not the case after the first century A.D. Of course maharaja is taken by rulers who claimed and, in reality, wielded authority over the whole Island, but at the same time we find instances when maharaja was used by independent local rulers. An inscription found at Muvangala in the Batticaloa District mentions a king called Tisa maharaja son of Saba raja.⁴ The Mahāvamsa states that Vasabha captured power dethroning Sabha.⁵ Hence the Muvangala inscription shows that a son of Sabha assuming the title maharaja was contending with Vasabha for the throne.⁶ Presumably he held

1. EZ.III.p.166

2. ASC.SPR.1896.pp.55,56; EZ.IV.pp.227-228; There is a single unpublished inscription which does not conform to this practice; in this Mahallaka Nāga is called mahala raja (ASCAR.1932 J 9, UCR.VII.p.248). Mahallaka Nāga was the immediate successor of Gajabāhu.

3. See above, pp. 58 ff.

4. ASCAR.1959 (Appendix.II) G 52-53 No.6

5. Mv.35.59-70

6. EZ.V.p.418

little authority in the Island, and the chronicles do not even mention the existence of such a ruler. The Hābāssa inscription mentions a ruler named Utara maharaja son of Vahaba maharaja.¹ According to the chronicles Vasabha was a sovereign king who came to power after overthrowing the regime of the usurper Sabha.² Vasabha's inscriptions bear witness to his widespread authority,³ but the chronicles do not mention a ruler named Utara, son of Vasabha, governing from Anuradhapura. The Samantapāsādikā mentions an Uttararājaputta⁴ who may be the Utara maharaja mentioned in the Hābāssa inscription. It was Vankanāsika Tissa, who, according to the Mahāvamsa, ascended the throne after Vasabha.⁵ Another inscription found at Tammannāva and dated in the same period on paleographical grounds, mentions a Duṭṭaga maharaja son of Vahaba maharaja.⁶ Hence it must be assumed that Vasabha had at least three sons, although the chronicles name only one who ascended the throne at Vasabha's death.⁷ Since the other two rulers also took the title maharaja and said nothing about Vankanāsika Tissa in their inscriptions it cannot be said that they were subordinate to the king of Anuradhapura. It may possibly be inferred from this that at the death of Vasabha the kingdom was divided among his three sons, who ruled their respective territories as maharajas. Therefore maharaja was not confined to sovereign rulers during

1. EZ.IV.p.217

2. Mv.35.59-70

3. See below, p p. 244 ff.

4. Smp.p.544

5. Mv.35.112

6. Unpublished, only referred to in EZ.IV.p.215

7. Mv.35.112

this period.

Further evidence could be adduced to substantiate this point from instances outside our period. The Anuradhapura slab inscription styles Khudda Pārinda, one of the Tamil invaders of the Island after Mittasena, as maharaja.¹ But the Tamils who occupied the Island in the fifth century did not spread beyond Rājaratṭha, and opposition to Tamil rule was organised in Rohana from the very beginning.² Another instance of this usage of the term maharaja is found in an inscription at Veherakema, Batticaloa District, belonging to the 7th century, in which a certain Vahaka maharaja is mentioned.³ No name of a king given in the chronicle falling within this period bears even a remote semblance to the Vahaka mentioned in the inscription. Hence the only possible inference is that this is another instance of a local ruler using the title maharaja.

All this indicates that the title maharaja had lost its lofty position as an exclusive royal title taken only by paramount rulers of the Island.⁴ As we have seen, during the period under consideration maharaja did not necessarily indicate paramount rule over the whole Island although most of the rulers who are termed maharaja were supreme kings. This may be one of the reasons why kings started taking other high-sounding titles such as maparumaka, apaya, sirimekavana, etc.⁵ However, this phenomena was not only

1. EZ.IV.p.114

2. Cv.38.12 ff

3. EZ.IV.p.143

4. See above, pp. 58 ff

5. See below, pp. 86 ff

confined to Ceylon. During the time of the Kuśānas, maharaja was used in India to denote supreme kings, but in the Gupta and subsequent periods the term was extended to cover subordinate rulers too.¹ When mahārāja lost its importance as a royal title indicating the supreme ruler, Indian kings took more impressive titles such as mahārājādhirāja, paramabhaṭṭāraka and so on.²

* * * *

A new title given to kings during this period is maparumaka or maparumuka as found in the inscriptions. This term bears a close affinity to the title parumaka found in early Brahmi inscriptions used by the nobility of the day.³ Mapurumaka occurs as a royal title for the first time in the reign of Kaniṭṭha Tissa, who calls himself mapurumaka Malitisa maharaja, in one of his official records,⁴ one and a half century after the time when the term parumaka had become obsolete.⁵ It is not certain whether the kings of the early period ever took the title parumaka, although there is a single instance where a certain Duṭṭaka is termed the son of parumaka Tisa, son of parumaka Abaya.⁶ If the

1. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.III. p.15 note.4
(Text and Translation)

2. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.III. p.17 note.1

3. See below, pp. 106 ff.

4. ASC.SPR.1896.p.47 (iii)

5. Kaniṭṭha Tissa reigned from c.A.D. 176 to 194 whereas the inscriptions of parumakas ceased to appear in the first half of the first century A.D.

6. AIC.p.32, No.25

Duṭṭaka mentioned in the inscription is identified with Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya, the two parumakas mentioned in the record are his father and grandfather, Kākavaṇṇa Tissa and Goṭṭābhaya. But the identification remains quite unlikely since Duṭṭaka is not given a title, and Parker does not favour such an identification.¹ A revised text of the inscription made by Paranavitana completely rules out any connexion of the title parumaka with royalty.² Unless new epigraphic data throw further light on this point we must refrain from connecting the term maparumaka used as a royal title with that of parumaka which is not taken by kings. Yet it may be conceded that kings may have used the title of maparumaka in early times, but may have refrained from giving any official recognition to this title at a time when they were trying to establish their authority over petty chiefs who were known as parumakas. By the time of Kaniṭṭha Tissa the order of parumakas was non-existent as a separate social entity or was known under a different name.³ Hence there was no reason to fear that kings would be confused with parumakas if they officially took the term maparumaka (Skt. mahāpramukha = great chief) which may have been used to denote them even at an earlier date.

It is also to be noted that maparumaka or maparuma is always used with maharaja and not with raja.⁴ After Kaniṭṭha Tissa up to

1. AC.p.438 (51)

2. Paranavitana reads this inscription as parumaka abaya puta parumaka Tisaha duṭṭakani. 'The excavations of the chief Tissa, son of the chief Abhaya' CJS.G.II.p.108 (432)

3. See below, pp. 106 ff

4. AIC.p.76 No.61; ASC.SPR.1896.p.47 (iii); EZ.III.p.179, note.3; Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume, p.68 (3)

the time of Mahāsena maparumaka is not mentioned in the royal inscriptions at all. Only one inscription mentions a maparumaka maharaja whose name is not given. This inscription is dated back to the time of Kaniṭṭha Tissa on paleographical grounds and has been attributed to Kaniṭṭha Tissa.¹ There are two possible explanations of this absence of reference to the title maparumaka until the time of Mahāsena. Either the kings did not wish to use a title which was used in a slightly different form by the nobility of an earlier date, or the title may have been used by some other kings whose documents have not survived. Nicholas favours the latter explanation.² A point to be stressed is that Kaniṭṭha Tissa was one of those kings who was always called maharaja, which may be significant as there is such a large number of inscriptions mentioning him.³ This may suggest that the king was trying to add some glamour to his position using grandiose titles which would explain why he introduced the new title maparumaka.

Although Kaniṭṭha Tissa is mentioned in so many inscriptions only one names him as maparumaka. Perhaps the king may have given up the new title as it was not looked upon with favour and this may be the reason why it does not appear in his other records. This supposition would support the argument that the title was not used again until the time of Mahāsena, in contradiction of the view that

1. AIC.p.76 No.61; UCR.VII.p.246

2. UCR.VII.p.246-7

3. ASC.SPR.1896.p.47. (iii); AIC.p.76.No.61.; EZ.I.p.255;
CJSG.II.p.201. (610,611); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (66);
UCR.VIII.p.127 Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume.p.64

the title was used but that the epigraphs have not been found.

An inscription found at Karambagala which belongs to the reign of Mahāsena's son calls Mahāsena mapurumaka mahasena maharaja.¹ The Bōvattegala inscription of Jetṭhatissa II refers to Mahāsena as maparumaka.² Buddhādāsa who falls slightly outside our period and who is a grandson of Mahāsena is given this title in a private document which mentions the king only in the date.³ After him one of the Tamil invaders of Ceylon who occupied the throne for some time in the fifth century A.D. took the title mapurumu.⁴ Further epigraphic evidence outside our period may be adduced to show that the title was continued by the kings that followed and the term was gradually changed to mapurumukā in the ninth and tenth-century inscriptions.

In tracing this development of the title we may first mention the inscription found at Timbirivāva where Kāśyapa is called maparumu.⁵ Then comes the inscription of Kumāra Dhātusena who is referred to as mapurumuka.⁶ The Andaragollāva inscription belonging to the later seventh century or the eighth century refers to Dāṭhopatissa as mapurumuka.⁷ This series of inscriptions shows that the term maparumaka used by Kaniṭṭha Tissa was gradually

1. EZ.III.p.179,note.3; EZ.IV.p.224

2. ASCAR.1934.J 18,(71,viii); Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume. p.68(3)

3. EZ.III.p.122

4. EZ.IV.p.114

5. UCR.XIX.p.98

6. UCR.XIX.p.100-101

7. UCR.XIX.p.104

changed and ultimately took the form mapurmukā or mapurum in the inscriptions of the ninth and tenth-centuries.¹

It is interesting to notice in the last two inscriptions, (although they fall outside our period) that maparumaka stands in the place of raja or maharaja of the earlier records. It would seem that mapurumaka gradually replaced raja and maharaja as a royal title, at least for a definite period. Perhaps it would have appeared redundant to use equivalent expressions in the same record and only the more popular one of the time would have been retained. It may be added that maharad (the equivalent of maharaja) in the ninth and tenth-century inscriptions is seldom used along with mapurumu or mapurumuka to denote the same person.² Some kings who are given the title maparumaka also bear the additional title apaya. The significance of this term has already been dealt with.³

Paranavitana points out the close affinity of maparumaka and parumaka, the Pali equivalents of which pamukha or pāmokkha, was used to denote the president or leader of a corporation as well as any of the members of the republican assembly of Cetas.⁴ On the basis of the above reasoning the scholar concludes that maparumaka is reminiscent of a time when the leadership of the country was to a certain extent popularly elected.⁵ But the main objection to this is that, unlike gamani or abhaya, maparumaka was used neither

1. For instance, EZ.I.p.38, p.43

2. For instance, EZ.I.p.84; p.115,p.185,p.202

3. See above, pp. 28 ff

4. 'tam disva Cetapāmokkhā rodamānā upāgamu,' Jātaka.vi.p.515 cited Paranavitana, JRAS.GB & Ir.1936,p.448

5. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936, pp.447-449

in the inscriptions nor in the chronicles until the time of Kaniṭṭha Tissa. One possible explanation for this long lapse has been suggested above, i.e. that the title was in general use but purposely left out of the epigraphs.¹ Against this view, however, and against Paranavitana's thesis that maparumaka stems from the much earlier title parumaka, it may be suggested that it seems unreasonable that Kaniṭṭha Tissa would have revived a title indicative of the humble origin of kings at a time when they held absolute rule. Perhaps the title originated because the Lambakaṇṇas (to which line of kings Kaniṭṭha Tissa belonged) were among the nobles before they assumed royal status and parumaka was used as a generic term denoting the elite; hence the foremost of the nobles, the king, was called maparumaka (Skt. mahāpramukha).

* * * *

The Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa give Meghavaṇṇābhaya as an additional name of Goṭhābhaya.² The Cūlavāṃsa gives Siri Meghavaṇṇa as the name of the son and successor of Mahāsena.³ But the inscriptions belonging to this period and some others which fall slightly outside our period show that this also was a title rather than a name. The term takes a slightly different form in the inscriptions. Goṭhābhaya is called raja mekavana abaya in inscriptions and Meghavaṇṇābhaya in the chronicles.⁴ In the

1. See above, p. 88

2. Dv.22.55, Mv.36.98

3. Cv.37.53

4. ASC.SPR.1896.p.55 III, p.56 IV; EZ.IV.p.227; Mv.36.98

Tonigala inscription the son of Mahāsenā is called Sirimekavana Aba.¹ In the Rūgam inscription Sirimeghavaṇṇa is called Sirimekavana Aba maharaja.² The Karambagala inscription mentions the same king as Sirimekavana (maha) raja apaya.³ The younger brother of Sirimeghavaṇṇa and a son of Mahāsenā is called Sirimeka Jeṭṭatisa maharaja in the Ruvanvālisāya inscription which gives the name of the king as Buddhadāsa.⁴ All these instances make it clear that mekavana or meghavaṇṇa was a title rather than a personal name.

The special significance attached to this title is rather difficult to explain. In one instance the term was used as a name of a person other than royalty; there was an amacca named Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya who, taking the side of the Mahavihara, took the field against the religious policy of Mahāsenā.⁵ Even though we have evidence of its being used only by three kings as a royal title during our period and in the centuries that followed, there is no reason to suppose that it was not taken by some other kings as well whose records we do not possess. This is particularly plausible if we consider that salamevan (P. Silāmeghavaṇṇa) was one of the most popular titles of kings during the ninth and tenth centuries.⁶ One step towards the different title salamevan is also noticeable in the few instances

1. EZ.III.p.177-178

2. AIC.p.75.No.24 revised, UCR.VII.p.238

3. AIC.p.75,No.21 revised; EZ.III.179. note.3; EZ.IV.p.224

4. CJSG.I.p.173 (374)

5. Mv.37.17

6. For instance, EZ.I.p.43,p.84. Cf also, UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.364-365

of the occurrence of the title in our records. Goṭhābhaya is called only mekavana aba, but to Sirimeghavaṇṇa the additional siri is prefixed. At this time a less important place was accorded to Abhaya which had formerly enjoyed a more prominent position. Abhaya is not given as part of the name of the king in the chronicle, which only designates him as Sirimeghavaṇṇa.¹ The next king to bear the title dropped not only abaya but the latter part of the term meghavaṇṇa. And so the term became sirimeka (Skt. śrīmegha) as found in the Ruvanvālisāya inscription.² The term appears also in the Tāmgoḍa inscription of Kittisirimegha.³

Meghavaṇṇa (Skt. meghavarṇa) literally means 'cloud-coloured', i.e. the 'black one'.⁴ This is reminiscent of one of the opprobrious names given to one of the earliest kings, Kākavaṇṇa.⁵ Kākavaṇṇa literally means 'crow coloured' or black. Although we find this name given to him in our chronicles the contemporary documents do not term him as such; the only occasion when this king is referred to under this name in a lithic record is some five centuries later.⁶ Hence the literal meaning of the term meghavaṇṇa has to be ruled out as an explanation of the term as used by kings. It could hardly be the case at a time when the kings were not even satisfied with existing titles raja and maharaja and introduced mapurumaka and dropped gamani which was reminiscent of their humble

1. Cv.37.53

2. CJSG.I.p.173 (374)

3. EZ.V.pp.85-86

4. Pali Dictionary.sv.PTS

5. Mv.22.11

6. ASCAR.1952.IV.G 41 (8)

origin.

Wickramasinghe equates meghavanna with mevunā; although the former assumes the form mevan in medieval Sinhalese literature (cf. salamevan for silāmeghavanna), the garden called Mahāmeghavana is called Mahamevunā.¹ Theoretically, mekavana, the form that must have been used by the contemporary people as it is found in that form in the inscriptions, can be derived from either meghavanna or meghavana, the latter of which would mean 'cloud park'. Mahāmeghavana or Meghavana is the name of the famous royal park made by Muṭasīva and later donated to the Sangha during the time of Devānaṃpiya Tissa.² This is the place where the Mahavihara was later built;³ and Meghavannābhaya is the name of the amacca who identified himself with the interest of the Mahavihāra and rebelled against the king's religious policy.⁴ Goṭhābhaya, the first king to take the title meghavanna, came to power by ousting Sirisanghabodhi,⁵ who was most probably put on the throne by the influence of the Sangha.⁶ Goṭhābhaya's religious policy shows that he made every possible attempt to win the favour of the Sangha, and the unprovoked attack on the Abhayagiriya Vihara

1. EZ.IV.p.66, note.6

2. Mv.11.2, The Mahāvamsa explaining why the park was called Mahāmeghavana states that when the park was donated to the Sangha a great cloud arose and poured forth rain out of season. (Mv.11.3)

3. Mv.15.24 ff

4. Mv.37.17-18

5. Mv.36.91-98

6. See below, pp. 216-7

during his reign was most probably undertaken in an attempt to please the Mahavihara, whose favourite for the throne he ousted¹ in order to regain his patrimony. Thus in his effort to identify himself with the Mahavihara he may have assumed the epithet mekavana because of its association with the park in which the Mahavihara was situated. The fact that the title was taken by two of his grandsons may be due to the practice of grandsons taking their grandfather's name.² We do not know whether all this would permit us to suggest that some religious significance was attached to the title.

The Rasavāhinī mentions a Meghavaṇṇa who was a petty deity, (devaputta) living at Udumbarapabbata.³ Uppalavaṇṇa or the 'lotus coloured' deity was considered one of the four guardian deities called cattāromahārājā.⁴ Uppalavaṇṇa was entrusted with the protection of the Island by Sakka (Skt. Śakra) when the Buddha on his death bed requested Sakka to guard the Island where the faith would flourish in the future.⁵ This belief was deeply rooted in the minds of the people around the first century A.D., and thence came to the chronicles and aṭṭhakathās.⁶ It is possible that the king assumed this title because he was considered the protector of

1. See below, pp. 216-7

2. EZ.III.p.124; EZ.IV.p.219

3. Rsv.p.229 (8-8)

4. Nks.p.84; Dictionary of Pali Proper Names.I.p.418

5. Mv.7.1-5

6. L.S.Perera, 'The Pali Chronicle of Ceylon', Historians of India Pakistan and Ceylon. Ed. C.H.Philips. London. 1961. p.33

the kingdom. But the identity of Uppalavaṇṇa and Meghavaṇṇa still remains to be examined.

The Cūlavamsa describes Sirimeghavaṇṇa, the son and successor of Mahāsena, as Mandāthā bestowing all kinds of blessings on the world.¹ The comparison of the king with a cloud as the giver of rain is probably the origin of the term. We may point out in support of this that kings during this period were preoccupied with the idea of obtaining sufficient water to cultivate land.² The reign preceding that of Goṭhābhaya witnessed a severe drought and king Sirisanghabodhi had to resort to his 'super-human powers' to obtain rain.³ In the reign of Mahāsena, the immediate successor of Goṭhābhaya, the energy of the whole nation was directed towards preserving water.⁴ Not long afterwards Upatissa carried out a religious ceremony to obtain rain during a severe drought.⁵ Manu also equates the generosity of the king with rain.⁶ All this supports the idea that the concept of the king as the rain giver, upon whom the prosperity of the people depended, gave birth to the term.

The word siri prefixed to mekavana also deserves our attention. Siri is prefixed to the names of only a few kings of our period but appears often in the centuries that follow. Two kings of our period

1. Cv.37.53

2. See below, pp. 252 ff

3. Mv.36.74-79

4. See below, p. 253

5. Cv.37.189-198

6. Manu.ix.304.

are named Sirināga,¹ and we may add to this the name of Sirisanghabodhi,² the designation given to the saintly king who sacrificed his life for the benefit of the many.³ In the period that followed, siri is prefixed to the name of Sirimeghavaṇṇa and to that of Jeṭṭha Tissa, the two sons of Mahāsena.⁴ Mahānāma is called Sirinivāsa and Sirikūṭha (sirikuḍḍha and sirigutta) in the Pali commentaries;⁵ in an inscription found at Monarāgala in Buttala Vādiraṭa Korale, this king is called Tiripali⁶ (Skt. śrī pālita). We may add to this list of rulers who used the title siri one of the Tamil rulers who occupied the throne for a short time after Mittasena; his name was Tiritera which, according to Paranavitana, is the same as sarataraya, a corruption of Skt. śrī dhara ārya (P. siri dhara ayya), found in one of the inscriptions at Kataragama.⁷ In the Anuradhapura slab inscription the queen of Khuddha Pārinda is called Tirimaha rejena (Skt. śrī mahā rājini).⁸

Siri is the name of the goddess of prosperity and is often used as an honorific prefixed to the names of deities to express veneration. Sometimes it is used to denote royal dignity

1. Mv.36.21-23; Mv.36.54

2. Mv.36.73

3. Mv.36.73-96

4. Cv.37.53; CJSG.I.p.173 (374)

5. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. IV.p.235, see also note. 5: Cf. The Pali Literature of Ceylon.p.96.

6. CJSG.II.p.23 (384) see also, pp.18-19 (384)

7. EZ.III.pp.217-218

8. EZ.IV.p.114

personified.¹ It also means fortune, majesty and glory and is prefixed to the names of persons, gods and places.² Kings were particularly flattered when they were called the abode of the goddess of fortune.³ Siridhara (bearer of fortune), sirinivāsa (the abode of fortune), sirikūṭa (the summit of fortune), siripālita and sirigutta (protected by fortune) contain the same idea. It is to be noticed that this title may be due to direct influence from the Indian subcontinent, for siri is prefixed to the names of Indian royalty from the Sātavāhanas onwards.⁴ Whatever may have been the cause of its appearance in Ceylon it should be noted that the association of siri with royalty indicates a further elevation of kingship in the Island.

The above study of royal titles illustrates the gradual development of leadership. The two terms gamani and abhaya represent the very nature of the original local leadership; the titles raja and maharaja mark perhaps the first stage of a formal kingship with all the royal paraphernalia. Maharaja which seems to have been introduced to the Island by the Sangha was at first taken only by the supreme kings of Anuradhapura, but raja was assumed by all the rulers whether supreme kings, dependent, semi-dependent or independent. Along with raja and maharaja appeared devanapiya, which was invariably used by the Indian emperor Aśoka; with the passage of time devanapiya

1. Sanskrit Dictionary s.v. Monier Williams.

2. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. III. pp.10-11, note 4. (Text and Tr.)

3. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. III. pp.58-65 (Text and Tr.)

4. Epigraphia Indica. VIII. pp.59 ff

developed into the family name of the Anuradhapura royal house and as such it did not survive the downfall of the first dynasty. A few inscriptions contain the important title damaraja, showing how the Buddhist ideas of kingship made their way into the Island.

Many changes took place in the application of royal titles during the dynasty of kings starting from Vasabha. The earlier title gamani was completely dropped and raja receded into the background. Maharaja fell from its high place and for some time its position was occupied by the new royal title maparumaka. Meghavanna, another royal title emerging in this period, represents the king as the giver of rain and prosperity to his subjects, and the title siri marks the peak of this development, bringing the king to a level nearer to gods than to human beings.

CHAPTER III

The Nobility, its formation and divisions.

Inscriptions as well as literary evidence suggest that from the earliest times one section of the society played a prominent role in the administration. It is the intention of this chapter and in the next to inquire into the formation and divisions of this class or classes and the manner in which they functioned in the administration.

The term aya occurs frequently in the inscriptions and is found in the chronicles as well. The word is derived from Skt. ārya meaning honourable, respectable, noble and so on.¹ Aya may be a direct derivation from Pali ayya which stands for sire, lord, master, etc.² The Mahāvamsa uses the word ayya in places where aya is found in the inscriptions.³ Various princes belonging to the main line of rulers at Anuradhapura are termed aya. Aya Sura Tisa of the Mutugala inscription has been identified with Sūratissa who succeeded Mahāsīva on the throne of Anuradhapura.⁴ If aya Asalisa of one of the Mihintale inscriptions may be identified with Sāliya, a son of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya was

1. Sanskrit Dictionary. sv. Monier Williams.

2. Pali Dictionary. sv. PTS

3. Cf. ayya Uttika of the Mahāvamsa (22.13-14) with aya Uti of inscriptions. ASCAR.1934. J 21 (78)

4. CALR.III.p.4 (2)

also known as aya.¹ Five inscriptions at Rāssahela or Rājagala mention maha aya and Tisa aya, the sons of Devanapiya maharaja Gamani Abhaya.² Tisa aya has been identified with Lajji Tissa and Maha aya may be Lajji Tissa or another son of Saddhā Tissa.³ The Gallena Vihara inscriptions in the Kurunegala District mention an aya Tisa who has been identified with Mahācūlika Mahātissa by some scholars and with Bhātika Abhaya by others.⁴ Lonapi aya of one of the inscriptions at Mihintale may be identified with a son of one of the three kings, Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī or Kuṭakanna Tissa.⁵

These instances show that aya was used to denote the princes of the Anuradhapura royal family. But once they ascended the throne they were no longer known as aya but were given the title of raja or maharaja. For instance the aya Tisa in the Gallena Vihara inscriptions is known with raja or maharaja in all the inscriptions mentioned after his accession.⁶ This would indicate that aya was used to denote members of the royal family of Anuradhapura until they ascended the throne.

1. AC.p.443-444 (62)

2. ASCAR.1935. J 9 (39)

3. Ibid.

4. AIC.pp.25-26, (2) see also the note to p.26; EZ.V.pp.252-255

5. EZ.V.p.216(29), p.232

6. Whether this aya Tisa is Mahācūlika Mahātissa or Bhātika Abhaya is unsettled, CJSG.II.p.150,note.1; CJSG.II.p.25(398); UCR.VII.p.243,note.50; JRAS.CB.XXXVI.No.98.p.66; JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.131, (42),p.132(54); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142; EZ.III.p.154.

As will be shown below, aya was used by petty local rulers before the first century B.C. and there is reason to believe that the term denoted rulership even in the case of the Anuradhapura dynasty in the earliest period but they soon dropped this practice. We have already referred to the inscription mentioning Sūra Tissa as aya Sura Tisa.¹ But he is not mentioned in any inscription as raja or maharaja which is surprising if he ascended the Anuradhapura throne. This is particularly so as the chronicle gives him a reign of ten years.² The fact that he is called aya in the Mutugala inscription rules out the possibility that he was referred to in the inscription as a sovereign king, but the Mahāvamsa states that Sūratissa was known as Suvannapīṇḍatissa before his accession and he ascended the throne as Sūratissa.³ Either we have to reject the entire statement of the Mahāvamsa, a measure which is not justified as the statement is an incidental reference included in the chronicle merely because it may have been in the aṭṭhakāthās, or we must assume that Suvannapīṇḍatissa took the name Sūratissa when he was merely promoted to the rank of a local ruler with the designation aya and not to the throne. This resolves the inscriptional statement that he was an aya with the Mahāvamsa statement that he was promoted in rank.

Inscriptions of local ayas are found all over the Island. A Brahmi inscription found at Kollādeniya in Vellassa of the Badulla District is dated in the reign of prince Nāga (Nagayaha rajayasi).⁴

1. See above, p. 100

2. Mv.21.3

3. Mv.21.9

4. ASCAR.1934. J 18. (71,i)

Paranavitana suggests that this inscription dates from the time of Mahānāga, who was ruling Rohana when his brother Devānampiya Tissa was the sovereign king of Ceylon,¹ but we cannot rule out the possibility that it may refer to a local prince who had no connexion with the Anuradhapura king. Whatever the identity of the prince, the fact that the document is dated in his reign is a strong indication that he held political authority over the area. Another inscription found at Kaludupotāna Malai mentions an aya Abaya in whose son's reign the inscription is dated (ayabaya putasa rajayasi).² Thus, even though we do not possess conclusive evidence that the term aya as applied to the younger members of the Anuradhapura royal house indicated rulership, at least some of the local ayas definitely held political authority. The dating of inscriptions in their reign is decisive in this respect.

One noteworthy fact about these local ayas is that in most cases their families had a member who took the title raja at some time or other in their history. Thus the Bovattegala inscriptions mention an aya whose father is styled damaraja;³ the Lenagala inscriptions of Beligal Korale, Kegalle District, mentions aya Dusatara, his son aya Siva and the son of the latter, aya Dusatara;⁴ while another inscription at Yaṭaḥalena Vihara, Beligal Korale, Kegalle District, gives Dusatara the title raja.⁵ Two explanations are

1. ASCAR.1934. J 18(71,i); Cf. also, UHC.I.Pt.1.p.154

2. ASCAR.1933. J 19(84), Text. UCR.VII.p.240

3. AC.p.453 (80-81); CJSG.II.pp.99-100,p.114 (462)

4. CJSG.II.p.202 (615)

5. CJSG.II.p.203 (618)

possible for this difference in the terms applied to the same person in the two records. Either aya Dusatara after his position was consolidated took the higher designation raja, or raja Dusatara was reduced to the lower position of aya owing to the growing power of the Anuradhapura king. But the fact that two ayas date their inscriptions without any reference to an overlord makes it impossible for us to conclude that aya always denoted subordinate rule.

One of the Brahmi inscriptions refers to a gamika (village headman) who traces his lineage to another village headman who in turn is described as the grandfather of a maha aya who was the son of Tisa aya.¹ Since the son of a gamika an ordinary village headman having no connexion with royalty assume the designation aya, petty local chiefs rising up the ladder must have taken the title aya.

A Brahmi inscription found at Situlpavuva mentions a princess Anurādhā (Anuridi), the wife of aya Pusadeva and the daughter of parumaka Pusadeva.² This may suggest that ayas were on the same social standing as parumakas, but in truth ayas were above parumakas in the social scale although there are a few instances where parumakas had matrimonial alliances even with the king.³ In actuality, the power and the position of ayas must have been decided mostly by the abilities of the persons concerned and their relationship with the Anuradhapura kings, both political and consanguine. As in the case of some local rajas, some of the local ayas may have been related to

1. CALR.III.p.209(4)

2. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.132 (56)

3. See below, p. 113

the royal family of Anuradhapura. On the whole the ayas were high in the social scale, with their own harems,¹ a privilege otherwise confined to the royalty alone.

Paranavitana points out that the term āpā found in the later Anuradhapura period is equivalent to aya in the early period. The honorific suffix paya was later added to aya and this was mistranslated as ādipāda in the Pali chronicles. An intermediary form ayapaya is found in the Jetavanārāma inscription of Mahinda IV. The āpās of later date were often deputed as governors of provinces and this may be the continuation of an older institution.² Although references to ayas are rare in the period after the first century A.D.,³ the presence of the same term with the same meaning in the later Anuradhapura period may indicate that aya did not fall into abeyance after the early centuries of the Christian era. It became a definite office at a later Anuradhapura period, and was no longer considered a designation applied to a section of the society which held political authority in different parts of the country.

After the first century B.C. the local ayas disappeared. This may have been due to the gradual expansion of the power of the Anuradhapura rulers and the consequent displacement of the local potentates by local officers. Whatever the cause of the disappearance of the ayas, it is clear that they formed a local ruling class sometimes connected with the main line of rulers of Anuradhapura and subordinate to them and at other times strong enough to ignore them. They were just below royalty, at times hardly

1. CJSG.II.p.204 (620)

2. EZ.III.p.82, Cf.also, UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.365-367

3. An inscription in the reign of Goṭhābhaya refers to Mitayaha (EZ.IV.p.227) and Wijeratne translates Mitayaha as 'prince Mitta' See, History of the Sinhalese Noun.p.87

distinguishable from them as the younger members of the Anuradhapura dynasty also had this designation; and they were the highest of the nobility.

In addition to the ayas, the existence of a powerful ruling class which filled most of the administrative ranks of the day is evident from inscriptions as well as literary sources. They were known as parumakas.

Parumaka is prefixed to personal names in hundreds of inscriptions, mostly registering cave donations although a few of them record other grants as well. Goldschmidt rendered this word as Brahmana.¹ Bell argues that the word signifies 'chief' and was applied to kings; he also draws our attention to the similarity of this word with Skt. pramukha and Elu (Sinhalese) pāmok, and with the Tamil word perumakkan used for a prince and a nobleman.² Wickramasinghe equates parumaka with Skt. paramaka as suggested by Muller and Boyer.³ Paranavitana holds that the Pali word pamukha is often used to denote a president of a guild (sreni) and suggests that some of the parumakas in the early Brahmi inscriptions may have been heads of such bodies; he further notes that pamukha is used to denote the nobles who formed the aristocratic republics in the time of the Buddha.⁴ Most probably the term is derived from Skt. pramukha, Pali pamukha and pāmokkha, which has the

1. P.Goldschmidt, 'Notes on Ancient Sinhalese Inscriptions'.
JRAS.CB.1897.p.2

2. ASC.Report on Kegalle District. 1892.p.69,note.3

3. EZ.I.p.17

4. JRAS.GB & Ir. 1936. pp.447-449

general meaning of a chief.¹

The important place occupied by parumakas can be ascertained only after considering the high offices that they held. The inscriptions record two senāpatīs who were parumakas: the Kuṇḍumbiyagala,² Vavuniyāva,³ and Situlpavuva⁴ inscriptions refer to Nandimitta, the senāpati of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya as parumaka Mita.⁵ Phussadeva, who seems to have succeeded to the post of senāpati after Nandimitta, is called parumaka in an inscription found at Vālaellugoḍakaṇḍa.⁶ Parumakas sometimes figure as ametis (Skt. amātya).⁷ Some parumakas were baḍagarikas (Skt. bhāṇḍāgārika) or treasurers.⁸ We do not know whether all the parumakas who were baḍagarikas were treasurers to the king, but at least one inscription expressly refers to the baḍagarika of king Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya,⁹ and this may well have been the case with some other baḍagarikas. The Akurugoḍa inscription refers to an ayaka (accountant) of a maharaja, who is also a parumaka.¹⁰ There is another instance of

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1. Sanskrit Dictionary.sv. Monier Williams.
 2. AC.pp.432-433 (47)
 3. EZ.V.pp.236(1),237(3),p.251-252
 4. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130(21)
 5. EZ.V.p.251 f
 6. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.140 (i)
 7. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15);
 8. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130(25); p.131(42); EZ.V.p.211(3),p.223(62,65), p.224(69,70); UCR.VIII.p.122
 9. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131 (42)
 10. EZ.V.p.316-317

a parumaka holding the same office in the reign of Mahācūlika Mahātissa.¹ Parumakas figure as adekas a term which corresponds to Skt. adhyakṣa meaning an inspector or a superintendent.² The inscriptional references to parumakas serving as asa adeka³ and sivika adeka⁴ show that they ranked as superintendents of horses (aśvādhyakṣa) and superintendents of palanquin bearers (sivikādhyakṣa). The sivikādhyakṣa mentioned was in the service of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya. An inscription from Mihintale mentions a parumaka who is given the additional designation tanaka.⁵ This may have been derived from Skt. sthānika which is used to denote a governor or a high official connected with the administration of a religious establishment.⁶ A parumaka held the important and influential office of mahadoratana, an office which has been identified with the dovārika mentioned in the chronicles.⁷ One of the inscriptions at Kaduruvāva mentions a parumaka who held the office of kanapeḍika.⁸ Parānavitana points out the possibility that this is derived from two Sanskrit words, kārṇa and peṭha, meaning a scribe and a basket, respectively: this parumaka would have been a record keeper or an archivist.⁹ There were bojiyas or

1. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.132 (54)

2. Sanskrit Dictionary.sv. Monier Williams

3. EZ.V.p.242 (14)

4. CJSG.II.p.194(564); UCR.VIII.p.122, Cf. also, note.67

5. EZ.V.p.224 (68)

6. EZ.V.p.224, note.1; D.C.Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary.sv

7. See below, pp. 160 ff

8. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

9. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

bujikas (Skt. bhojaka) who were parumakas.¹ The above enumeration of various high offices held by parumakas leaves little room for doubt that most of the high officials belonged to this group, which formed the ruling class or a considerable section of it.

An inquiry into the formation of this class gives rise to the question of whether or not they were hereditary. Opinion is divided on this issue. L.S.Perera assumes that the title passed from father to son since only very rarely is a son of a parumaka denied that title.² Ellawala states that the title was more or less hereditary,³ but since many inscriptions do not style both the son and the father parumaka, Nicholas believes that it was not hereditary.⁴ The final word on this question must await the analysis of all the Brahmi inscriptions which mention parumaka. Among the published Brahmi inscriptions more than forty call both father and son parumaka,⁵ while less than thirty inscriptions give only the father that title.⁶ On a few occasions the genealogy of a parumaka family is traced to the third generation.⁷ A few inscriptions do not attribute the title

1. UCR.VIII.p.123

2. IACI.I.p.84

3. Ellawala, Social Institutions in Ceylon from the 5th century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. (Thesis presented for the Degree of Ph.D in the University of London). 1962.p.98.

4. UCR.VIII.p.121-122

5.6., Nicholas refers to 76 inscriptions (including unpublished inscriptions) where father and son are called parumaka and about forty inscriptions where this does not occur. (UCR.VIII.p.121 f)

7. CJSG.II.p.190(544); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.132 (54); CALR.III.p.214(1); EZ.V.pp.408-418 (8,15); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.136 (11)

to father but the son is credited with it.¹ In one such record the father is simply a gapati (P. gahapati), a householder.²

Thus if we assume that parumakas always mentioned their titles in the inscriptions, the use of the term indicates that the position was not hereditary. But there are specific instances showing that this was not the case. Two inscriptions at Mihintale refer to the same person with and without the title parumaka. The first of these refers to a certain treasurer Sangha, a parumaka, and his son Uti, also a parumaka.³ The second inscription refers to the treasurer Sangha and his son Utiya Tisa. The first inscription refers to a donation made by parumaka Uti and the second records a donation of Ruvala, the daughter of Utiya Tisa.⁴ On the reasoning that there cannot have been two Sanghas, both holding the office of treasurer at the same time and having a son named Uti, these inscriptions must refer to the same person. The slight difference in the name given to the son of Sangha may be due to the fact that the daughter of Uti was more insistent in giving the full name of her father. As the title is absent in the record of Uttiya's daughter, it cannot have been conferred after the engraving of the first record. Two Brahmi inscriptions found at an ancient monastery at Dūlvala point to the same conclusion;⁵ one contains a reference to a parumaka Damarakita and the other mentions Damarakita without any title or designation, referring to the same person with and without the title.

1. CALR. III.p.213 (15); JCBRAS.NS. II.p.130(26); EZ. V.p.215(25), p.236(1), EZ. V.pp.412-418 (15)

2. JCBRAS.NS. II.p.130 (26)

3. EZ. V. 223 (62)

4. EZ. V. 223 (63)

5. JCBRAS.NS. V.p.158 f, (2-3)

That the title parumaka was not always used by a person who merited it is further supported by the fact that some of the high dignitaries of state mentioned in the inscriptions are not credited with the title although they held positions almost always held by parumakas.¹ Further the senāpati of Saddhā Tissa is called Aggidatta (Agidata) without any title in an inscription found at Valaellugoḍakañḍa, but the same inscription calls Phussadeva parumaka senapati Phusadeva.² Since references to matrimonial alliances among parumakas show that they intermarried mostly within their group³ or with still higher ayas, Aggidatta, being the son-in-law of Phussadeva, should most probably be a parumaka. If this argument is valid this is another instance where a parumaka figures without his title in an inscription. All this is in favour of the argument that parumakas did not always display their title in inscriptions.

Therefore the explanation for the large number of inscriptions where parumaka is not applied to sons of parumakas is that the sons may have been satisfied with giving the title to their parents since that implied that the descendants were of the same social status. The assumption of the hereditary nature of the title accounts equally well for the obverse situation in which the father is not credited with the title taken by his descendants. Another possible explanation is that the title may have been assumed by the descendants

1. EZ.I.p.150; EZ.V.p.412 (15)

2. UCR.VIII.p.116; JCBRAS.NS.V.p.140 (1)

3. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.129 (10), p.132 (56); EZ.V.p.238 (6)

only after the death of their parents. In the light of all this data the parumakas may have been a class of hereditary nobles.

It now remains to establish the nature and status of this nobility. L.S.Perera suggests that since all the five sons of a parumaka are credited with the title, it was an honorific rather than the indication of an office.¹ Nicholas, who revised and published most of the Brahmi inscriptions, states that parumaka was used by an upper class or a nobility from which were drawn the higher officials of the kingdom; 'men who were not the sons of parumakas could be elevated to that rank. The title did not necessarily imply territorial jurisdiction or authority'.² But it is not possible to ascertain whether any person was promoted to the rank of parumaka by the king or whether it was assumed by powerful personages who held some command in the country and who formed the higher dignitaries of the state.

It may be possible to assume on the basis of a few instances that those who were not parumakas could be elevated to that rank, as suggested by Nicholas.³ An instance where the father of a parumaka is termed gapati lends support to such a supposition.⁴ But it is not certain whether the son was officially invested with the title or whether he simply assumed it when he had been promoted

1. IACI.I.p.84

2. UCR.VIII.p.124

3. UCR.VIII.p.124

4. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130(26)

to some government office.

Ellawala assumed that there was hardly any distinction between gamikas and parumakas,¹ and some joint grants made by parumakas and gamikas have been quoted to substantiate this conclusion. But of the hundreds of inscriptions referring to parumakas only a very few associate parumakas with gamikas.² These appear to be the exception rather than the rule; almost all the high government offices were held by parumakas whereas such positions were very rarely given to gamikas.³ The inscriptional evidence provides quite a few instances where parumakas were directly connected with royalty by matrimonial ties;⁴ one such instance reveals that a certain parumaka was married to a daughter of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.⁵ Hence Nicholas rightly suggests that parumakas signified the aristocracy next below royalty⁶ (royalty is extended to cover ayas as well), high in the social scale; as such the gap between them and gamikas should have been great indeed. No gamika ever held the additional title parumaka.

1. Ellawala, Social Institutions in Ceylon from the 5th century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. p.139
2. CJSG.II.p.225(744); EZ.V.p.236 (2), p.239 (12)
3. There is only one instance where a gamika holds the high position of ameti, CJSG.II.p.125 (529)
4. UCR.VIII.p.122 (a grand father of anabi Upalaya is mentioned as parumaka, abi was the title given to princesses UHC.I.Pt.1. p.228); AC.p.444; JRAS.GB & Ir.1936, p.449; JCBRAS.NS.II. p.132 (56); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.151(10)
5. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.151(10)
6. Nicholas, Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon. (JCBRAS.NS.VI. Special Number) p.17

The association of parumaka with another term, bata, also sheds some light on the character of the former. First, we must understand the meaning of bata. Wickremasinghe, suggests that it may have been derived from bhrātr (brother) used as a term of endearment or honour in speaking of a kinsman or of a member of the same religious order.¹ As an alternative suggestion he also points out the possibility of its being derived from Skt. bhartr meaning 'lord', but Wickremasinghe prefers the former interpretation.² The term was later translated as 'reverend', probably taken as a term of honour used to denote a member of the Buddhist community.³ Recently Paranavitana has pointed out the term bata and a variation of it, barata, were not restricted ecclesiastics, and he concludes that bata may be derived from Skt. bhartr meaning 'lord'. The term was applied both to monks and laymen.⁴

An important question that arises here concerns the reason why a section of the élite should have termed themselves bata to indicate their high social status without taking the more commonly used term parumaka. This calls for an explanation.

In a few instances, a bata and a parumaka make joint grants;⁵ in a single instance a certain parumaka is said to be a son of a batiya, 'her lordship'.⁶ One important observation to be made is

1. EZ.I.p.141

2. EZ.I.p.141

3. CJSG.II.p.107(427), p.122 (505), p.127 (533) (534)

4. EZ.V.p.252

5. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.129 (5), JCBRAS.NS.V.p.151 (12)

6. EZ.V.p.216-217 (30)

that no bata held any other rank in addition to that title. The grants by batas are confined to cave donations. Batas never refer to their fathers as bata or vice versa, and so the term is always limited to a single generation. Thus we may assume that, whereas bata was used by respectable members of the society, the title parumaka indicated a definite class of society, that of the nobility from whom people were drawn to fill the administrative ranks of a higher grade.

The connotation of the term parumaka when it is used by women, sometimes slightly modified as parumakalu,¹ is difficult to establish. There are a few instances where both husband and wife are called parumaka,² but more often the parumaka's wife is not called parumaka.³ In a single instance only the wife and not her husband is styled parumaka.⁴ The husband, wife and father of the wife, are all called parumaka in one instance;⁵ another attributes parumaka to the husband and wife but to neither the daughter nor the son.⁶ Lastly, we may cite an instance where a mother and son are styled parumakas.⁷ Nicholas is of the opinion that the term is only titular for a woman and indicated no office,⁸

1. EZ.V.p.238 (6), Cf. note 3

2. CJSG.II.p.223 (732); EZ.I.p.19 (2 b) EZ.V.p.238 (6)

3. CALR.III.p.78 (4), p.212 (8); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.129 (6,7); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.146 (2), p.154(5); UCR.VIII.p.123; EZ.V.p.224 (70), p.242 (14)

4. CJSG.II.p.221 (719)

5. EZ.V.p.238(6)

6. EZ.I.p.19 . No 2. A, b

7. EZ.I.p.145, No.8 (a)

8. UCR.VIII.p.123-124

but this remains uncertain. During the period under consideration, the throne was twice occupied by women,¹ and it is possible that their lesser counterparts followed suit. The instance when the title is given to the wife and not to her husband favours such a supposition.

After the first century A.D. no inscriptions refer to parumakas. This cannot be ascribed to the discontinuance of the practice of making cave donations, for there is at least one instance when the parumakas register donations other than caves.² Moreover, since in the following period other kinds of grants are not restricted to the kings, even if cave donations ceased one might expect reference to parumakas if they continued to hold the same place in the society under the same designation. Therefore either parumakas lost their position after first century (if so with the downfall of the first dynasty) or, more probably, the nobility were not known by this term hereafter.

There is, however, another feature which coincides with the disappearance of parumakas, namely the emergence of a new kind of official termed raṭiya or raṭika in the inscriptions and raṭṭhiko in the literary records.³ But although no raṭiya in Ceylon had the additional title of parumaka, this does not in any way lend support to the proposition that raṭiya or raṭika was the new name for parumakas.⁴ Raṭiyas, as will be shown, were evidently officers

1. Mv.34.27; 35.14

2. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

3. ASCAR.1956, G 10(1); ASCAR.1933. J 17 (71); CJSG.II.p.126(528), p.215 (676), p.218(696); EZ.III.p.251-252; UCR.VIII.p.127; Ssvp.p.54, See also the note: Mv.33.53

4. UCR.VIII.p.127

in charge of a district called raṭa,¹ and hence the term raṭiya denotes an administrative organization founded on territorial basis which is quite different from any administration by parumakas, the basis of which seems to be the extended family.

Since the inscriptions of raṭiyas do not call their parents or sons raṭiyas, these officials appear to have been appointed on a territorial basis with no hereditary principle. This disappearance or lessening of the effect of family organisation on administration and the emergence of the order of raṭiya may represent the growth of monarchical power. It is possible that the disappearance of parumakas was due to the establishment of the Lambakannas on the throne,² who replaced the old nobles with the members of their own clan.

* * * *

One of the most influential sections of the nobility from the earliest times seems to have been the Bodhāhāarakulas or the families who brought the Bodhi tree. They were appointed to protect the Bodhi tree by the emperor Aśoka before he sent the Bodhi branch into the Island³ at the request of the Sinhalese monarch, and they remained as the attendants to the Bodhi tree ever after.

1. See below, pp. 169-70

2. Mv.35.59-70

3. Mv.19.1-3

The earliest text which refers to the Bodhāhāarakulas is the Samantapāsādikā; though the commentary on Vinaya Piṭaka was written by Buddhaghosa it is generally accepted that the original Sinhalese commentary on the Vinaya was composed or put into its final form by the end of the first century A.D.¹ The Samantapāsādikā states that Aśoka appointed eighteen Devakulas, eight Amaccakulas, eight Brāhmanakulas, eight Kuṭumbikakulas, eight Gopakakulas, eight Taraccakulas, and eight Kālingakulas, for the protection of the Bodhi tree.² When the Bodhi tree was brought into the Island the king bestowed the whole Tambapaṇṇidīpa on it and for three days the Bodhāhāarakulas, who are described as solasa jātisampanna kulāni (sixteen noble families), carried out the business of state.³ When the Bodhi was brought to the capital on the fourth day and when it was planted, the sixteen noble families appeared in royal attire while the king acted as the dovārika.⁴

The Dīpavaṃsa adds few details to this and the brief account found in this text suggests that some of the data found in the Mahābodhivaṃsa belonged to the tradition at least by the time when the Dīpavaṃsa took its present form. This does not preclude the possibility that some of the details found in the Mahābodhivaṃsa may be later accretions but the basic facts such as the appointment of Bodhigupta to protect the Bodhi tree, the giving of some of the articles used in the abhiṣeka ceremony to the Bodhāhāarakulas and the donation of land for the maintenance of

1. EHBC.p.87

2. Smp.p.96

3. Smp.98

4. Smp.99

the families, which are mentioned in the Dīpavaṃsa, should have been in the tradition by the early centuries of the Christian era and therefore deserve credit.¹ However the verses in the Dīpavaṃsa are very corrupt at this point and it is difficult to understand clearly what the text really means. If the translation given by B.C.Law is acceptable the Bodhāhāarakulas received some articles used in the coronation presumably to be used in the consecration of the Bodhi tree.²

The account of the Mahavamsa which is richer in details remarkably corroborates some facts found in the Mahābodhivaṃsa. The chronicle states that the Indian emperor, Aśoka, appointed eighteen persons from Devakulas, eight each from Amaccakulas, Brahmanakulas, and Setṭhikulas, and persons from Gopaka, Taracca and Kālingakulas, and also from Pesakāras, Kumbhakāras, from all śrenis as well as Nāgas and Yakkhas.³ It is further said that when the Bodhi tree arrived in the Island, Devānampiya Tissa entrusted the government to the sixteen kulas and himself became the dovārika to the Bodhi tree for three days.⁴ The same account contains the information that the members of the sixteen kulas were adorned with royal ornaments when they planted the Bodhi tree.⁵ Finally, it is stated that those eight setṭhikulas who brought the Bodhi tree into this Island are called Bodhāhāarakulas.⁶

1. Dv.16.33-37

2. Dv. (B.C.Law Edition,) p.231

3. Mv.19.1-3

4. Mv.19.31-32

5. Mv.19.43

6. Mv.19.67

The Mahābodhivaṃsa which relates the history of the Bodhi tree contains, in addition to the information found in the works referred to above, a detailed account of the appointment of the princes who brought the Bodhi tree to various high offices.¹

An interesting point to be noted in the Mahāvaṃsa account is the statement that only the eight Setthikulas were known as Bodhāhāarakulas.² But the Samantapāsādikā which, as we have seen, preserves the tradition in its earliest form, does not include Setthikulas among those who were appointed to protect the Bodhi tree but refers to the kuṭumbikakulas in their place.³ The Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, commenting on the verse of the Mahāvaṃsa, states that the setthikulas are the same as the kuṭumbikakulas.⁴ The Mahābodhivaṃsa lists both kuṭumbikakulas and setthikulas among those who brought the Bodhi tree.⁵ The Colombo edition of the Mahāvaṃsa gives vessakulas in this place and the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī edited by Malalasekara gives vessakula as a variant.⁶ Since setthi, vessa and kuṭumbika have allied meanings in Pali we may assume that all these refer to one group of families who were entrusted with guardianship of the Bodhi tree and that they were wealthy householders.

Our sources contain many references to kuṭumbikas. They are described as addho mahaddhano mahābhogo (having great wealth and resources).⁷ That this is not mere rhetoric may be seen from the

1. Mahābodhivaṃsa. pp.153 ff

2. Mv.19.67

3. Smp.p.96

4. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. p.399, L1.21-22

5. Mahābodhivaṃsa. p.154

6. Mahāvaṃsa, Colombo. 1908, 19.2 Cf. note; Vaṃsatthappakāsinī.p.399 note.3

7. Ssvp.pp.83,91

specific references to kuṭumbikas. The Vamsatthappakāsinī referring to a kuṭumbika states that the people recognised him as being wealthy and belonging to high family.¹ There was a kuṭumbika who owned wealth and fields.² Another Kuṭumbika received a thousand cart-loads of grain.³ A woman kuṭumbika owned a miraculous cow which gave ghee instead of milk.⁴ The king granted a kuṭumbika a janapada and wealth.⁵ There was a kuṭumbika in the Girimāṇḍala who was wealthy and prosperous.⁶ A wealthy and prosperous kuṭumbika named Sangha was the chief of Kandhakapitṭhigāma.⁷ Another kuṭumbika who lived near Mahāgāma was a rich man.⁸ All these references show that the kuṭumbikas were economically well off.

In addition to their wealth a few instances recorded in our sources show that they held high positions at the royal court. Three warriors of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī are described as belonged to kuṭumbika families in the Mahāvamsa. Theraputthābhaya, one of the ten warriors of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, belonged to a kuṭumbika family.⁹ His father is also called issara, perhaps denoting the chieftainship of the area.¹⁰ A kuṭumbika named Vasabha was the father of another warrior of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, namely Velusumana.¹¹

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.454, LI.25-26

2. Svp.p.53(4)

3. Svp.p.89

4. Svp.p.90 (22)

5. Svp.pp.107-109

6. Ssvp.p.83

7. Ssvp.p.91

8. Ssvp.p.101

9. Mv.23.55-62

10. Mv.23.55

11. Mv.23.68

Labhiya Vasabha, also one of the ten warriors of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, was born to Matthakuṭumbika.¹ The Sahassavatthupparakāra adds more names of warriors of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī who belonged to kuṭumbika families. According to this work Velusumana, Sura Nimala, Mahāsona, Goṭhaimbara, and Mahā Nela all belong to kuṭumbika families.² We know from the Mahāvamsa that all these warriors were given thānantaras-high offices- by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī once the war was won.³ Thus kuṭumbikas, a section of those who brought the Bodhi tree, enjoyed high positions at the court in later times.

Further evidence could be adduced to show the high position enjoyed by this section of Bodhāhāarakulas. It was a seṭṭhi who represented the common people at the coronation ceremony of the king and poured water over the head of the king for the third time.⁴ On two occasions kuṭumbikas are called issaras,⁵ a term which is generally used in the chronicles for the kings.⁶ The Cūlavamsa mentions a kuṭumbika one of whose descendant, Dhātusena, re-established the Sinhalese royal dynasty in Anuradhapura after the Tamil occupation in the 5th century.⁷ The Mahāvamsa uses the term mahākula for the families among whom the warriors of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī were drawn.⁸ The same text states that some of these warriors belonged to kuṭumbika families and the Sahassavatthupparakāra adds

1. Mv.23.90 ff

2. Ssvp.pp,83-87; 91-93; 93-94; 94-100; 100-103

3. Mv.26.1

4. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.306, L1, 5-14

5. Mv.23.55,61; Ssvp.p.91 (42)

6. Dv.3.5; 3.16; 3.18; 3.39; 9.37; 11.14; 17.87;
Mv.14.21; 15.132; 15.184

7. Cv.38.14

8. Mv.23.18 ff

more names of warriors who were kuṭumbikas.¹ The terms mahākula, kulageha and kulīna were used to name the upper strata of the society.²

Perhaps the kuṭumbikas acquired more importance than the other kulas who accompanied the Bodhi tree because they alone became its custodians. That only the kuṭumbikas became the guardians of the Bodhi tree is also confirmed by the name-ending 'Gupta' of Bodhigupta and others, for Gupta was a typical Vaiśya name-ending in India:³ we have already noted that some of our sources have yessa (Skt. Vaiśya) kulas in place of kuṭumbikas kulas and that the Vamsatthappakāsini equates kuṭumbikakulas with vessakulas.⁴

The Dīpavaṃsa maintains that the king gave the Devagutta mansion (pāsādaṃ) and maintenance villages (gāmahogē) to the other families who accompanied the Bodhi tree.⁵ This gift strongly suggests that they became officers of the king.

The Mahābodhivaṃsa gives a long list of persons who were appointed high officers of the state; the list contains the name of the person appointed, the office given to him and, for the first few offices, the ceremonies with which the offices were bestowed.⁶ Bodhigupta and Sumitta are said to have been made Laṃkā Jayamahālekhaka and Jayamahālekhaka respectively.⁷ Candagutta

1. See above, p. 122

2. Mv.23.18; Mv.15.3; Ssvp.pp.26-28; See below, pp 134-5

3. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. III.p.11 note 1 (Text and Tr.)

4. See above, p. 120

5. Dv.16.37

6. Mahābodhivaṃsa.p.163 ff

7. Mahābodhivaṃsa.p.163-164

was made Malayarāja, Devagutta Laṃkāmahāraṭṭhika, Dhammagutta Moriyaseṭṭhi, Suriyagutta Bhinkāragāhakaṭṭhāna, Gotama Chattaggāhaka and Jutindhara Ārakkhaparicariyatthana. A long list of other persons who were the jeṭṭhakas or those families who received offices is mentioned and among them the Asiggāhaka, jeṭṭha of the setṭhikulas, and Dvāranāyaka, jeṭṭha of the balatthakulas, deserve special mention.¹

Yet it is impossible to rely upon all these details given in the Mahābodhivaṃsa regarding the offices bestowed by the king on the families who brought the Bodhi tree. This is particularly so when we consider the date of the Mahābodhivaṃsa, which in its present form must be assigned to the 10th century at the earliest.² Nevertheless, the Mahābodhivaṃsakathā is one of the sources from which the author of the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī drew material.³ This indicates that the original Sinhalese work upon which the Pali Mahābodhivaṃsa is based goes back to earlier period. But, as Malalasekara has pointed out, the Mahābodhivaṃsa may have utilised material from various other sources as well.⁴ The long list of high offices to which the members of the Bodhāhāarakulas were promoted, as given in the Mahābodhivaṃsa, arouses the suspicion that the author is trying to connect all the high offices of the court with which he was familiar with the Bodhāhāarakulas.

1. Mahābodhivaṃsa.p.166-167

2. Malalasekara The Pali Literature of Ceylon.p.157

3. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī.p.412, Ll.9-13

4. Malalasekara The Pali Literature of Ceylon.pp.158-159

It is not certain whether the tradition preserved any references to the exact offices to which the members of the families who escorted the Bodhi tree were promoted. But there can be no doubt that the tradition retained some of the names of persons who were entrusted with the guardianship of the Bodhi tree, as two such names are found in the Dīpavaṃsa.¹ The original Mahābodhivaṃsa must have contained more such names and perhaps some references to the high ranks given to them.

A small episode contained in the Mahāvaṃsa throws further light on this point. The chronicle records that king Yasalālaka Tissa lost his life in a jest played with his dovārika who was made to behave like the king while the king played the role of the dovārika.² This is reminiscent of the ceremony performed by king Devānampiya Tissa when the Bodhi tree was brought to the Island.³ It has been pointed out that the dovārika who captured the throne from Yasalālaka Tissa was not a mere doorkeeper but an amacca whose family had held that high rank for six generations over a period of a hundred years and under five kings.⁴ This may record the tragic end of the family of Devānampiya Tissa caused by the continuation of an ancient ritual.⁵ If such was the case, the dovārika Sabha may be a descendant of those who brought the Bodhi tree. The Mahābodhivaṃsa in its list of offices conferred on those who brought the Bodhi tree mentions that of the dovārika to which the leader of the balatthas (palace guards) was appointed.⁶

1. Dv.16.33,36

2. Mv.35.49-57

3. Mv.19.31-32

4. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

5. In some parts of ancient world the king abdicated for a short period of festivity and a temporary ruler was appointed. see, Sir. J.G.Frazer, The Golden Bough London.1932. (Abridged Edition).pp.283-289.

6. Mahābodhivaṃsa.p.167

That the dovārika family of Sabha enjoyed high social prestige is also evident from the fact that Vasabha, who ousted the usurper, Sabha, caused Sabha's daughter to marry his son Vankanāsika Tissa.¹

A sixth century inscription refers to an office laka jaya mahamati which is identical with Pali laṃkā jaya mahāmacco, equivalent to Laṃkā jaya mahālekhako² which was conferred on Bodhigupta according to the Mahābodhivaṃsa.³ An inscription dated in the reign of Mahānāma refers to a mahalena (Skt. mahālekhaka)⁴, and a lekhaka dhītikā (daughter of a scribe) is mentioned in the Mahāvamsa in the reign of Mahāsena.⁵ All these facts strongly suggest that some of the members of the families who accompanied the Bodhi tree served the king as court officials.

Thus the Bodhāhāarakulas seem to have enjoyed wealth, social prestige, and high position at the royal court. They may have been very influential in society as well as in the political field because as the guardians of the Bodhi tree they maintained a close association with the Sangha.

* * * *

The Laṃbakannas were another important section of the nobles from the dawn of the Christian era. The origin of these people has given rise to much debate. Later sources like the

1. Mv.35.101-111

2. UCR.XVI.p.4

3. Mahābodhivaṃsa. p.164

4. CJSG.II.p.23(384)

5. Mv.37.26

Saddharmaratanaṅkaraya trace their origin back to the Bodhāhāarakulas and connect them with those who brought the Bodhi tree.¹ No reference in any of the earlier sources, even in the Mahābodhivaṃsa which is dated in about the 10th century, shows any relationship of the Laṃbakanna with the Bodhāhāarakulas.

The Laṃbakanna had already gained importance by the time of their first appearance in the history of Ceylon, or more correctly in the chronicles. The earliest reference to them occurs in the Mahāvamsa statement that the Laṃbakanna deserted the king and came back to the capital when Ilanāga went to Tissavāpi for a royal bath.² The enraged king made the Laṃbakanna work under the supervision of Caṇḍālas when building a road as a punishment for this contumacy.³ Provoked by the insult the Laṃbakanna took up arms against the king, fettered him and ruled the country for three years before the king regained the realm after a bitter struggle with the usurpers.⁴

The peculiar punishment meted out to the Laṃbakanna shows that the king's intention was to humiliate them; it follows from this that the Laṃbakanna enjoyed high social prestige. Moreover the king could not raise sufficient support immediately to fight the rebels and had to leave the Island.⁵ On his return after three years the king had to fight the Laṃbakanna before regaining the

1. Saddharmaratanaṅkaraya. (Ed. Kolonnāve Sugunasāra) Colombo. (Homāgama) 1923.p.296

2. Mv.35.16

3. Mv.35.17-18

4. Mv.35.18-19,27,38

5. Mv.35.24-27

kingdom;¹ and the Lambakannas were powerful enough to hold against the king for some time.² Even after his victory the king did not attempt to exterminate the Lambakannas.³ These facts indicate that the Lambakannas enjoyed prestige and power. In view of all this it is rather doubtful whether the people were amused to see the haughty Lambakannas put to abject humiliation by the king.⁴ It is more likely that the people sympathised with the Lambakannas and that this is why it took such a long time for the king to regain his dominions.⁵ The hesitation of the king to wipe out the evil-doers may also have been due to his fear of further reactions from the Lambakannas. The Lambakannas who captured the throne in the reign of Ilanāga are called amaccas in the Vamsatthappakāsinī.⁶ This indicates that most of them or at least their leaders were court officials.

The suppression of this powerful nobility in the reign of Ilanāga was not long-lived, for within a very short period one of their number established a new royal dynasty which lasted for some centuries. Vasabha took the reins of government when he put to death the usurper Sabha, establishing thereby the Lambakannas on the throne.⁷ Even before Vasabha, a Lambakanna

1. Mv.35.34-35

2. Mv.35.35

3. Mv.35.41-43

4. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.175

5. It took three years before he could regain his kingdom.
Mv.35.27

6. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.644, Ll.32-33

7. Mv.35.59-70

is said to have held a very important position in the time of Sabha; this was the uncle of Vasabha, who was the senāpati of the king.¹ Hence the attempt to subdue the Lambakannas in the reign of Ilanaga proved futile.

Our sources reveal that the Lambakannas had some connexion with the royal court from the very beginning. The commentary on the Anguttara Nikāya reports a story that a certain Lambakanna is said to have related at the royal court.² The Mahāvamsa informs us that king Jetṭhatissa impaled those amaccas who would not attend the funeral procession of his father,³ but the Pūjāvaliya⁴ states that Jetṭhatissa impaled sixty Lambakannas who were his blood relations. We have seen that the Vamsatthappakāsini referred to the Lambakannas who rebelled in the time of Ilanāga as amaccas.⁵ Hence though we cannot rely upon the round figure of sixty of the Lambakannas who were acting as amaccas in the reign of Jetṭhatissa, the episode undoubtedly shows that the Lambakannas formed a predominant section of the royal court by the time of Jetṭhatissa. In the time of Vijaya Kumāra three Lambakannas from Mahiyaṅgana arrived in Anuradhapura and became councillors to the king.⁶ Ousting

1. Mv.35.59-60

2. Manorathapūraṇī, II.p.30

3. Mv.36.118-121

4. Pūjāvaliya, p.15. (Ed. Paṇḍita Mābopitiye Medhankara Thero.) 1932. Gunasekara translates this as 'sixty Tamils' which is obviously wrong. A Contribution to the History of Ceylon. (Translated from the Pūjāvaliya by B.Gunasekara.) Colombo.1895.p.24

The Rājāvaliya states that Jetṭhatissa killed Lamānna kalāvassan (Lambakannas the forest dwellers). It is also possible to render le Lamānna in the Pūjāvaliya as 'the Lambakannas the scribes,' le being derived from Skt. lekha.

5. Vamsatthappakāsini. p.644, LI.32-33

6. Mv.36.58-62

the king himself these three ascended the throne in succession.¹
 The dynasty of Lambakanna founded by Vasabha continued right
 down to the time of the Tamil invasion in the reign of Mittasena.²
 Even after Dhātusena, who is described as a Moriya prince, the
 Sinhalese throne was usually occupied by the Lambakanna.³

Geiger advanced the idea that the Lambakanna were one of
 the many totemistic clans that appear to have been in the Island
 from very early times.⁴ He points out the existence of such other
 clans as Moriya, Kulinga, Taracca, Balibhojaka and Sihala, and
 comes to the conclusion that Sinhalese society was totemistic
 throughout during these early days.⁵ The Dictionary of Pali Proper
 Names also admits the possibility of the Lambakanna's totemistic
 origin.⁶ Mendis goes a step further in suggesting that, since
 there were no totemistic tribes among the Aryan immigrants, these
 clans must have belonged to a separate racial stock. Pointing out
 the existence of a tribe called Moriyar in south India by the
 beginning of the Christian era and a reference in the Cūlavamsa to
 a tribe of Lambakanna in south India during the time of
 Parākramabāhu I, Mendis concludes that the Lambakanna of Ceylon

1. Mv.36.63,64,72,98

2. The Tīm̐birivāva inscription of Goṭṭābhaya shows that there was
 no dynastic break in the time of Vijaya Kumāra. Therefore the
 line of Vasabha continued right down to the Tamil invasion.
EZ.IV.p.226

3. Apart from the fact that most of the kings after Dhātusena are
 called Lambakanna or Lamānis in the Sinhalese chronicles, the
 inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries show that the
 kings took pride in claiming their descent from Lamānis.

4. Geiger, Cv.Tr. p.29, note2

5. CCM.pp.26-27 (20); JGIS.V.p.103

6. Malalasekara, The Dictionary of Pali Proper Names.II.pp.773-774

were connected with the pre-Dravidian population of south India.¹ This argument no longer holds, as Kosambi has brought forth impressive evidence of totemic tribes among Rgvedic Aryans.² Paranavitana holds the view that Lambakanna stands for scribes when the term first appears in the history of Ceylon, pointing out that the term Lamāni duvak is used in the Sinhalese chronicles as the equivalent of lekhaka dhītikā found in the Mahāvamsa. Therefore, according to this scholar, whatever the origin of Lambakannas may have been, they held the position of scribes in the administration when they first appeared in the history of the Island.³ Krishnaswami Aiyangar considers that Lambakanna merely refers to the pendant ear and suggests that it may have been derived from a deformity artificially caused by making holes in earlobes.⁴ A similar idea is expressed by Ellawala; the marking of earlobes was a regular custom in India from very ancient times and the mark is termed lakṣman. He derives lamāni from lakṣman and concludes that the Lambakannas of Ceylon were the same as chidrakarnas (those who had their earlobes bored) in India.⁵

The paucity of evidence does not permit us to draw any certain conclusion as to the derivation of the term Lambakanna or their origin; it is not even possible to state which of the two terms Lambakanna or Lamāni was the original form in Ceylon. Although

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1. Mendis, The Early History of Ceylon, pp.5-6
 2. Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History. Bombay. 1956. pp.89 f
 3. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.175. see also note 18
 4. Krishnaswami Aiyangar. Some Contributions of south India to Indian Culture, pp.86-87
 5. Ellawala, Social Institutions in Ceylon from the 5th century B.C. to the fourth century. A.D. p.87

Paranavitana equates Lambakanna with lekhaka - lamāni duvak with lekhaka dhītikā- it is also to be noted that lamāni is used as the Sinhalese equivalent to 'Lajji' in Sinhalese sources, e.g., Lajji Tissa of the Mahavaṃsa is called Lamāni Tissa in the Pūjāvaliya and the Rājāvaliya.¹ Ellawala's suggestion rests on the supposition that the term Lambakanna is derived from Lamāni, but it may well have been the reverse. The most that can be stated in this respect is that by the time they first appear in the history of Ceylon the Lambakannas had established themselves powerfully in the royal court, and very soon after this, they managed to capture royal power.

Geiger states that the Lambakannas were a branch of the solar dynasty and formed a section of the Sinhalese royal line. He also points out that they were never regarded as usurpers when they captured the throne² and he connects the Lambakannas with the Sākyas, citing an inscription from Kataragama. Hence Geiger concluded that the Lambakannas were a royal clan.³ Regarding these suppositions we may only point out that the connexion of the royal house of Ceylon with Sākyas was a later development due to the politico-religious ideas that had been gaining ground in the Island from the early centuries of the Christian era.⁴ When the first dynasty was extinguished with the death of Yasalālaka Tissa, the

1. Pūjāvaliya. p.9
Rājāvaliya. p.31

2. JGIS.V.pp.106-107, for the inscription he quoted see, EZ.III.p.224

3. CCM.p.113

4. L.S.Perera, 'The Pali chronicle of Ceylon'. Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. (Ed. C.H.Philips). London. 1961. p.33

Lambakannas, who were the most powerful section of the court at that time and who moreover had made an abortive attempt at an earlier date to capture the throne, assumed royal power.

The Lambakannas seem to have been associated with the performance of the abhiṣeka of the king. A clan of Lambakannas lived in south India during the time of Parākramabāhu I. Lamkapura, one of the generals of Parākramabāhu, enjoined their chiefs to carry out the duties of Lambakannas (Lambakanna dhuraṃ) when he performed the abhiṣeka of Vīrapaṇḍu under the aegis of Parākramabāhu.¹ This indicates that the Lambakannas had some special duties to perform and that these were connected with the abhiṣeka of the king. This is supported to some extent by the incidents which took place during the time of Ilānaga.² The Lambakannas left the king alone when he was taking a royal bath at Tissa tank; we have already seen that this ceremonial bath of the king was intimately connected with the abhiṣeka ceremony,³ which may be the reason why Ilānaga was so enraged when he found that the Lambakannas had deserted him before he had finished his bath.

There is hardly any evidence about nobles except the Lambakannas in the period after Vasabha. But some material in the Cūlavamsa falling slightly outside this period sheds light on the traditional nobles of our period as well. The Cūlavamsa states that when the powerful rice thief Mittasena, raised to the throne by an amacca, fell at the battle with the Damilas, all the nobles families

1. Cv.77.26-28, See also Geiger's Cv. Tr.II. note.1,p.94

2. Mv.35.16-40

3. See above, pp. 45-6

(janā kulīnā sabbepi) left for Rohana.¹ This indicates that by this time a separate social group considered superior to the ordinary people was in existence. Perhaps Mittasena failed to resist the aggressor because the kulīnas were not willing to support a king who had no right to the throne. When Dhātusena ascended the throne after driving away the invader he is said to have punished those kulīnas and kulagāmakas who attached themselves to the Tamils and protected neither the king nor the sacred doctrine.² But he fittingly rewarded all the nobles who came to Rohana and supported him.³

These facts indicate without doubt that the kulīnas were a separate class whose duty it was to protect the country or to assist the king in protecting it and maintaining good government. The Laṅbakappas, and probably the Bodhāhāarakulas, may have formed a considerable section of the kulīnas, and they would have formed the administrative bureaucracy of the times.⁴

The terms mahākula, kulageha and kulaputta, were used to denote the nobles of an earlier date.⁵ But the word kulīna is found only once in the Mahāvamsa, where it refers to the ladies who came to see the thera Mahinda in the Nandana park.⁶ The Cūlavamsa reference to kulīnas shows that they were closely associated with the king and the central government. Hence kulīna seems to be more

1. Cv.38.12

2. Cv.38.38-39

3. Cv.38.39-40

4. Cf. CCM.p.29 (23)

5. See above, p. 123

6. Mv.15.3

specific than mahākula in its connotation and denotes a special group of people connected with administration. Although the episode of Dhātusena refers to an incident that took place more than a century later, conditions should not have been very different in the last centuries of our period, for it is unlikely that the kulīnas of the time of Mittasena came suddenly into existence.

Kulīna has been taken to denote the families who belonged to one of the clans mentioned in connexion with the bringing of the Bodhi tree.¹ But there is no necessity to limit kulīnas to those clans alone. We have already seen that the members of the first dynasty of kings did not belong to any of these clans,² but persons associated with that family would certainly have been considered as belonging to nobles. Hence any limitation of kulīnas to Bodhāhāarakulas seems unwarranted. The Lambakannas, who formed an influential section of the members of the royal court, show no connexion with the Bodhāhāarakulas in the beginning.

Another fact which is clear from the account of kulīnas in the reign of Dhātusena is that these kulīnas were landowners, land being given to them as remuneration for the services rendered to the king. Geiger renders kulīna and kulagāmaka as those who belong to noble clans or kinship villages.³ But A.P. Buddhadatta has more correctly interpreted it as the nobles who were in possession of villages received as niṇḍagamas.⁴ It is clear from this and the statement that Dhātusena retrieved the land of these

1. CCM.p.29 (23)

2. The Devānampiya kula does not belong to any of these clans. See above,

3. Geiger, Cv.Tr. p.32, Cf. also, note 2

pp. 72 ff.

4. UCR.VIII.p.99

kulīnas who did not protect him or the Sasana, that the land was given to these nobles in lieu of payments for the services they rendered to the king.¹

Thus from the very beginning there was a local élite whose main function was administration. Of these aya represent the top of the nobility and they were perhaps virtually the 'kings' in their areas until the Anuradhapura kings extended their power. When this happened the ayas disappeared and the term lingered behind as an honorific applied to the younger members of the royal family and later transformed into a definite office. Next below them were the parumakas who held almost all the key positions in the administration of the kingdom. After the first century A.D. the term virtually disappears from the lithic records but whether this could be taken to mean that the class also disappeared is a moot point. Another section of the nobility were Bodhaharakulas or the families who brought the Bodhi tree and were charged with its guardianship; some members of this group received high positions at the royal court. When we consider the enormous influence exerted by the Sangha in the society² one may guess the importance of the Bodhāhāarakulas and the influential position they must have held. After the first century A.D. the Lambakannas suddenly appeared on the political scene and, within a few decades, captured the political power; members of their clan held power most of the time during the Anuradhapura period and dominated the court. Thus from the very earliest times of the history of the Island there was a class or classes of nobility whose main activity centred around royalty. But the evidence is so disparate that it is impossible to place them in definite relationship to one another.

1. Cv.38.38-39

2. See below, pp. 184 ff

CHAPTER IV

The Court and Kings Officers

'Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence he shall employ ministers and hear their opinion', states Kauṭilya.¹ Manu expresses the same idea in different terms.² However small the country may have been in Ceylon too the king had to exercise sovereignty through a hierarchy of officials who were known as amaccas. The term amacca is used to denote inmates of the same house, those belonging to the same house or family, companions of the king and so on.³ It is in this latter sense that the term is often used in the canonical literature,⁴ where it connotes a friend, a companion, a fellow worker, a helper especially one who gives advice, a bosom friend, etc.⁵ The word is often used in combination with mitta (friend) making the compound mittāmacca.⁶ Such is the general use of the word found in the chronicles in Ceylon. Thus the followers of Vijaya⁷ relatives of Devānampiya Tissa,⁸ and the supporters of

1. Arthaśāstra. Bk. I. ch. vii. 13

2. Manu. vii. 55

3. Sanskrit Dictionary. sv. Monier Williams.

4. Pali Dictionary, sv. PTS., The amacca who fled with the king from the battle field of Cūlanganiya is described as Cūlupatṭhāka (attendant) of the king. The king is said to have addressed him as bhātika (brother). (Manorathapūraṇī. II. pp. 212-214). The Saddhammappakāsinī describes amaccas as, kiccakaraniyesu sahabhāvattṭhena amā hontīti amaccā (I. p. 157) The Sumangalavilāsinī defines amacca as piya saḥāyakā (p. 297)

5. Pali Dictionary. sv. PTS.

6. Pali Dictionary. sv. PTS.

7. Cf. Mv. 7. 3. with Mv. 7. 43, 45, 46

8. Mv. 11. 20

Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya,¹ are termed amacca in the chronicles. Hence to render the term as minister is an unwarranted restriction of its meaning; courtier may be a better translation.²

From earliest times amaccas figure as the king's advisers. Devānaṃpiya Tissa sent to Aśoka a mission asking for theri Sanghamittā and a branch of the Bodhi tree only after taking counsel with the amaccas.³ When the Elder Mahinda advised the king with the Mahāppamāda Sutta and retired to the Missakapabbata to spend the rainy season, the king feared that the theras were about to leave the Island. He immediately consulted the amaccas.⁴ King Saddhā Tissa consulted the amaccas and donated a field of rice to the thera Summa.⁵ Elāra, on hearing that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī had come to wage war with him, took counsel with his amaccas and decided to give battle.⁶ Thus it appears that even at this early period the king used to take counsel with his amaccas on important issues.

It would seem that the amaccas gave counsel as a body; they acted in concert when Saddhā Tissa tried to override the legitimate claims of his elder brother at the death of Kākavaṇṇa Tissa. The chronicle states, 'the whole of the amaccas met together and sent a letter to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī'.⁷ On a similar issue we find amaccas

1. Mv.33.66

2. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.234

3. Smp. p.90

4. Smp.82

5. Dv.19.22

6. Mv.25.52-54

7. Mv.24.16

acting as a body although this time they violated the convention instead of protecting it, for when Saddhā Tissa died all the amaccas got together and elevated Thulathana to the throne with the consent of the Sangha.¹

However there is no conclusive evidence for the existence of a formal body of councillors to assist the king in carrying out day-to-day business. The word paheja occurs in two inscriptions belonging to this period, one in Rasanakvāva² and the other at Uddhakandara (Tissamahārāma).³ The Tonigala inscription in the reign of Sirimeghavanna mentions ameti paheja Sivaya.⁴ In an inscription found at Kaṭugampolagama an ameti is called Naka paheja.⁵ Paranavitana derives paheja from Pali pārisajja through a Prakrit form pāsajja which would mean a councillor.⁶ But Nicholas points out that, since there are instances when paheja is used without any reference to ameti, the significance of its association with amacca is not clear.⁷ Not only is there some uncertainty about the real meaning of paheja as used in the inscriptions of Ceylon but the usage of the term pārisajja in Pali works is also ambiguous. For although pārisajja generally means a member of an assembly,⁸ the Sumangalavilāsini, commenting on amacca and pārisajja says 'amāccati

1. Mv.33.17-18

2. ASCAR.1892.p.7; UCR.VIII.p.120-121

3. This inscription is not published, it is referred to by Nicholas. UCR.VIII.p.121

4. EZ.III.p.177

5. CJSG.II.p.110 (440)

6. EZ.III.p.182

7. UCR.VIII.p.120-121

8. Pali Dictionary, sv. PTS.

piyasahāyaka pārisajjāti sesā ānattikarā' ('amaccas mean bosom friends, pārisajja were others who carried out commands').¹ Hence the exact meaning of the term paheja is still to be determined.

Pliny states that thirty councillors were provided for the king by the people and no one could be condemned to death except by the vote of the majority. He further states that the condemned person had the right to appeal to the people in which case a jury of seventy was appointed; and if they found the appeal justified the thirty councillors lost all their respect and were subjected to the utmost disgrace.² This could be taken as indirect evidence for the existence of a formal body of amaccas or councillors in the early centuries before and after Christ. Nevertheless the fact remains that although Pliny belonged to the early years of the Christian era he did not have any first hand information regarding Ceylon. Hence in the absence of any corroborative evidence, Pliny's statement cannot be taken as conclusive.

But the word amacca did not merely designate a councillor. Almost every high dignitary connected with the king and the central administration is called an amacca. Aśoka conferred the office of senāpati on an amacca during the reign of Devānampiya Tissa.³ Velusumana, one of the ten paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, is called amacca.⁴ An amacca of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī fled from the battle-field of Cūlanganiya when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was defeated by his brother.⁵ An amacca was stationed

1. Sumangalavilāsinī.I.p.297

2. M'Crindle, Ancient India As Described in Classical Literature.1901.p.106

3. Mv.11.25

4. Ssvp.p.86

5. Mv.24.20

at a military outpost at Cūlanāga¹ and the warriors of the king Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya are called amaccas.² The high military leaders of the kingdom were thus called amaccas. Provincial governors also figure among amaccas; an amacca was at Mahāgāma probably as the provincial governor during the time immediately preceding the uprising of the Brāhmaṇa Tissa, in the reign of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.³ After the first century A.D. amaccas appear more frequently as provincial governors. One of the amaccas of Vasabha was governor of the Eastern sea coast;⁴ another amacca of Vasabha was governor of Nāgadīpa.⁵ A second century inscription found at Tissamahārāma mentions a Rohana bhojaka who was an amacca.⁶ Amaccas acted as provincial governors during this period in India as is indicated by the Junāgāḍh inscription of Rudradāman.⁷ On many important occasions amaccas figure as dūtas; when Devānāmpiya Tissa sent envoys to Aśoka bearing presents the group was headed by an amacca;⁸ the mission to bring Sangamittā and the Bodhi branch to Ceylon was sent under the leadership of an amacca.⁹ The Rasavāhinī mentions an amacca in the capacity of a gāmaabhojaka.¹⁰ In Ceylon gāmaabhojakas were not equivalent to gamikas but were higher

1. Ssvp.p.149

2. Mv.33.65-66

3. Ssvp.p.171

4. Inscription at Kumacolai, referred to by Nicholas, UCR.VIII.p.120

5. EZ.IV.p.237

6. CJSG.II.p.24(391), see also p.18

7. Epigraphia Indica.VIII.pp.42-49

8. Mv.11.20

9. Mv.18.1-6

10. Rsv.p.243 (9-5)

dignitaries connected with provincial administration.¹

We may draw two important conclusions from the above facts; first that the king had a body of assistants called amaccas and secondly that their functions were undifferentiated. It was possible for the king to carry on the government with a body of assistants with undifferentiated functions because the government was then a simple affair and did not call for trained specialists. Thus it is clear that the term amacca was used to denote all the high officers of state whether or not they acted as councillors. The king may have sought the advice of the pertinent high officer of state when he had to deal with any particular branch of administration.

The Sammohavinodanī indicates that, even though amaccas were usually chosen from among amacca families their special abilities were taken into account. The text shows how four sons of amaccas depended upon upatthāna (attendance), sūrabhāva (valour), jāti (birth) and manta (counsel) to obtain high office at the court. The first thought that he could obtain high office by being ever watchful in attendance. The second reasoned that he could please the king by showing his valour when remote areas rose in rebellion. The third intended to lay claim to a place in the court by depending upon his high birth alone. The last thought that he would get high office when the king was in need of counsel. In the end all four realised their hopes.² The episode makes it clear that when appointing individuals to high positions at the court the kings always took into consideration the personal abilities of the persons

1. An inscription at Dambulla Vihara mentions the bujika of Matukagama (UCR.VIII.p.123). He could not be taken as a village headman because bhojakas always figure as provincial governors (see below.p.p.170-1). Cf also the original meaning of gāma. See above, pp. 15 & 16.

2. Sammohavinodanī.pp.305-306

although the selection was generally drawn from noble families.

Ametis (Skt. amātya) are mentioned in lithic records sometimes without any other designation and at other times with some other official designation such as kanapethika (record-keeper),¹ mahadoratana (grandchamberlain),² Rohana bhojaka (governor of Rohana)³ and so on. This may mean that while some of the amaccas were mere councillors others had specific jobs to perform. The Sammohavinodanī refers to a sabbakammika amacca.⁴ Perhaps such amaccas were not given any specific work but were great favourites of the king and were charged with any pressing work in hand.

Sometimes amaccas acted as regents in the absence of a king. When Vijaya died amaccas dwelling in Upatissagama ruled the country while they awaited the arrival of the prince from Vijaya's homeland.⁵ It was the amaccas who recognised and entrusted the country to Paṇḍuvāsudeva when the latter arrived in the Island incognito.⁶ In more historical times when Kākavanna Tissa died the kingdom of Rohana was practically under the hand of the amaccas. It was the amaccas who intimated the death of the king to prince Gāmaṇī while the younger brother carried away the queen mother and the state elephant to Dīghavāpi.⁷ Amaccas elevated Thūlathana to the throne at the death of Saddhā Tissa.⁸ The Manorathapūraṇī refers to the

1. EZ.V.pp.408-418 (8,15)

2. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

3. CJSG.II.p.24 (391) see also, p.18(391)

4. Sammohavinodanī. p.311

5. Mv.8.4

6. Mv.8.10-17

7. Mv.24.14-16

8. Mv.33.17-18

practice of amaccas taking counsel and appointing a king when the ruler died without issue.¹

Amaccas took an active part in the consecration ceremony of the king. In legend, Vijaya and Paṇḍuvāsudeva were consecrated by amaccas;² in historical times Devānampiya Tissa,³ Kākavaṇṇa Tissa and Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya⁴ were consecrated by amaccas. At the death of Saddhā Tissa amaccas consecrated Thūlathana with the consent of the Sangha.⁵ Sangha Tissa was consecrated by two of his amaccas.⁶ Sanghabodhi was consecrated by his amacca, the bhāṇḍāgārika.⁷

Not all the amaccas appear to have enjoyed the same status at the royal court. Anurādha who founded the city of Anuradhapura was the mahāmacca of Vijaya.⁸ Devānampiya Tissa had a mahāmacca who headed the envoys to Aśoka.⁹ A Brahmi inscription at Kaduruvāva mentions a maha ametiya which is equivalent to the mahāmacca mentioned in the chronicles.¹⁰ This should not be confused with mahamata also found in the inscriptions and which apparently corresponds to the Skt. mahāmatra.¹¹

1. Manorathapūraṇī. I.p.171 f

2. Mv.7.71; 8.27

3. Mv.11.40-41. Two of the envoys who consecrated Devānampiya Tissa were his amaccas.

4. Rsv.p.161; Rsv.p.171

5. Mv.33.17-18

6. Mv.36.63-64

7. Mv.36.72

8. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.261 LL.29-30

9. Mv.11.20

10. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

11. See below, pp. 165-6

In spite of the evidence of the existence of the office of mahāmacca from very early times we know very little about this office. One important point is that the first chief minister (amaccam pamukham) mentioned is the king's bhāgineyya or his sister's son.¹ The appointment of such a close relation of the king to this position makes it clear that the office carried with it much power and importance. In this particular instance he was the senāpati or the Commander in Chief of the army as well. A point to be stressed is that the bhāgineyya or sister's son held a very important place under the family system of Sinhalese royalty.²

Apart from the high place occupied by the mahāmacca there were apparently differences of rank between other amaccas which were even indicated by their apparel.³ This difference may have rested on the importance of the office held by various amaccas, viz., the amacca who held the office of senāpati may well have been considered superior to the amacca who was the ayaka. We have already seen that one senāpati enjoyed the post of chief amacca, but this does not in any way suggests that the senāpati always held the office of mahāmacca.

One important development is that the post of amaccas became more and more hereditary; a Brahmi inscription found at Kaduruvāva shows that the rank of amacca was held by members of the same family down to the great-great-grandson through six reigns and for about a hundred years.⁴ If the identity of mahadoratana Data with dovārika Datta as proposed by Paranavitana holds good, this amacca

1. Mv.11.20

2. Geiger's Cv. Tr. introduction xxii f

3. Mv.29.23

4. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

family was powerful enough to overthrow the king and capture the throne.¹ A statement in the Papañcasūdanī implies that high positions like that of the senāpati were normally given to those born in amacca families (amaccakulajātā).² The Sammohavinodanī also implies that posts like senāpati were given to the descendants of those who already held such offices.³

A fact which contributed towards the power of the amaccas was their wealth. Some amaccas had their own baḍagarikas (treasurers),⁴ evidence of their affluence. This supposition is supported by the references to the donations made by amaccas to the Sangha. Such grants included tanks, fields, and income derived from water rights. An inscription found at Kāduruvāva which is dated in the first century A.D. records the grant of some fields and tanks and revenues derived from tanks by an amacca family.⁵ Two other inscriptions belonging to the first century A.D., one found at Ilukvāva,⁶ another at Avukana Vihara,⁷ record donations of a field and a tank, respectively, by two amaccas. A second-century inscription found at Bimpokuna⁸ records the donation by an amacca of some fields and tanks which were given to the benefit of the Vihara at the place. Another inscription found at the same place records a grant of a field of two karīsas (a square measure of land) of the Nitilaviti keta (field).⁹ A second century

1. Ibid.

2. Papañcasūdanī.V.p.14

3. Sammohavinodanī.p.443

4. CJSG.II.p.216 (680)

5. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

6. ASCAR.1893.p.6; UCR.VIII.p.120

7. UCR.VIII.p.120

8. CJSG.II.p.22 (379)

9. CJSG.II.p.22 (380)

inscription found at Torava Mayilāva Vihara registers a grant of one share of eight karīsas of a field purchased by an amacca named Maha Atulaya who bought three fields for one thousand kahāpanas (pieces of money).¹ The Labuāṭabāṇḍigala inscription which belongs to the fourth century registers a grant made by a son of an amacca to be spent on the festival of Ariyavaṃsa.²

As early as the time of Kākavaṇṇa Tissa of Rohana amaccas were powerful enough to repel the attempt of the younger brother Tissa to override the claims of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, and they enthroned the elder brother.³ But in the following generation the amaccas took a completely different stand when they supported a younger brother who usurped the throne, instead of upholding the conventional right of primogeniture.⁴ The rightful heir to the throne who eventually secured his claims to the patrimony by sheer power is reported to have neglected the Sangha for its imprudence in disregarding the right of primogeniture, but the chronicle is silent about the king's behaviour towards the amaccas who were the real culprits in initiating the measure.⁵ Most probably the king was compelled to let the malefactors escape punishment and even had to tolerate them in his own court. The arrogant behaviour of king Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya made all his amaccas desert him and had it not been for the timely interference of the Sangha the king's attempt to overthrow the Tamils would have become a complete

1. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.155

2. EZ.III.p.250

3. Mv.24.14-17

4. Mv.33.17-18

5. Mv.33.20

failure.¹ By the time of Ilanāga the amaccas had become so overbearing that the king thought it wise to bring them down by humiliation.² But the king was unsuccessful in the task he undertook and so ran the risk of losing not only his kingdom but even his head.³ To crown all these incidents, in the reign of Yasalālaka Tissa, a family which had held the high rank of amacca for five generations ousted the royal family itself and established themselves on the throne, although only for a few years.⁴ Thus we can draw the conclusion that the amaccas became a powerful aristocracy strong enough to resist the king if they acted in concert.

From the first century A.D. the references to amaccas become numerous. This is probably because of the expansion of royal power, authority and dominions. This expansion would have demanded more and more officials whom the kings would have chosen from the lower ranks such as gamikas, as we know from at least one such instance.⁵

The development of the amaccas' power is evident from the positions they held in later times. We have already seen that two amaccas acted as the governors of the Eastern sea coast⁶ and the

1. Mv.33.67-77

2. Mv.35.16-18, According to the Mahāvamsa they were Lambakannas. But the Vamsatthappakasini terms them amaccas as well. Vamsatthappakāsini, p.644. L.32

3. Mv.35.16-43, See above.p. 127

4. Mv.35.51-56; Cf also, EZ.V.Pt.3.pp.412-418 (15)

5. CJSG.II.pp.126-127 (529,530)

6. The inscription at Kūmacolai, north west of Batticaloa referred to by Nicholas. UCR.VIII.p.120.

Nāgadīpa¹ while another amacca was the governor of Rohana.² In a slightly earlier period it was a member of the royal family who acted as the governor of Rohana with the designation Rohinika Gamani.³ Hence it may be assumed that the amacca who acted as Rohana bhojaka would have exerted the same powers as those held by royal princes when they were acting as provincial governors. The same may have been the case with the two amaccas acting as the provincial governors in the Eastern sea coast and the Nāgadīpa. The appointment of amaccas as governors of such important areas as Nāgadīpa, the Eastern sea coast and Rohana show, without doubt, the enormous power they held and the king's dependence on them. Moreover the Hinguregala inscription,⁴ Vāllavāya Korale of the Ūva Province mentions an amacca residing in a camp of soldiers. The purpose of stationing a garrison at this place in Rohana is not very clear but the garrison of soldiers under an amacca may have been designed to assist the provincial ruler or may have been sent to quell a local disturbance.

After the first century A.D. the amaccas' power and influence spread in a new sphere. The chronicles record two instances when amaccas were entrusted with the resolution of a conflict that arose between the two major Viharas, the Mahavihara and Abhayagiri, a procedure which is apparent even at an earlier date, viz., in the reign of Bhātika Abhaya.⁵ In the reign of Vohārika Tissa a group

1. EZ.IV.p.237

2. CJSG.II.p.25.(391), also p.18

3. CJSG.II.p.25(398), see also, pp.17-18

4. EZ.V.pp.111-119

5. Smp.pp.582-583

of bhikkhūs at the Abhayagiri Vihara declared the Vaitulya doctrine to be the law of the Master. Thereupon the king appointed an amacca named Kapila to look into the matter. The amacca decided that the Vaitulyavāda was not in conformity with the law of the Master, and hence it was discredited and condemned.¹ Here it should be noted that an amacca was given the power to decide whether a doctrine was true or false.

The other instance occurs at the close of our period in the reign of Mahāsena. It is said that when a charge of a breach of vinaya was brought against thera Kohontissa of the Jetavana Vihara by the bhikkhūs of the Mahavihara, the king entrusted the whole matter to the viniccaya mahāmacca, who found thera Kohontissa guilty of an offence of pārājikā. The thera was consequently unfrocked against the wishes of the king whose favourite he was.² The scant regard paid to the king's wishes by the amacca is amazing, but the amacca may have been able to take such a high hand because of the special circumstances, for he had the backing of a powerful institution which commanded the religious faith of the majority of the population. Hence the amacca could afford to neglect the wishes of the king as he had the support of the Sangha. Both the king and the amacca would have been aware of this and any opposition to the decision would have caused serious disaffection among the people, which the king would not have dared to risk.³

Finally, we may mention the incident where an amacca openly flouted the authority of the king and raised the standard of

1. Mv.36.41; Nks.pp.66-67

2. Mv.37.38-39

3. See below, pp. 218 ff

rebellion against his religious policy.¹ Even granting that this also concerns an instance when popular sentiments were roused against the king it is remarkable that an amacca dared to adopt such a method to change the religious policy of a stubborn king.

As amaccas began to get out of hand, the king had to adopt strong measures to ensure that the amaccas would not exceed their limits. When Goṭṭābahaya died Jeṭṭhatissa had all the amaccas who refused to go in procession to his father's funeral killed and impaled around the funeral pyre.² This ghastly act of the prince earned him the name 'the cruel' (kakkhala).³ It is strange that the prince should have taken such a drastic measure for so frivolous an offence, but the real reason behind this may be that a section of the amaccas tried to keep Jeṭṭhatissa away from the throne in favour of the younger brother Mahāsena.⁴ This attempt may have been made at the instigation of Sanghamitta, whose favourite was the younger prince;⁵ this is why Sanghamitta left the shores when Jeṭṭhatissa ascended the throne.⁶

Not very long afterwards we find amaccas acting as 'king-makers'. Although these instances are beyond the scope of our study they may be helpful for the understanding of this development. Mittasena, the rice thief, was put on the throne by an amacca who wielded the

1. Mv.37.17 ff

2. Mv.36.118-121

3. Mv.36.122

4. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.192

5. Mv.36.117

6. Mv.36.123

actual power.¹ This situation can further be illustrated by two incidents which followed this event. Moggallāna put to the sword a thousand amaccas, who sided with his half-brother and the senāpati and caused the death of his father.² When Kittisirimegha ascended the throne the mahesi (queen mother) took the lead in everything and the kingdom was turned upside down; the amaccas thought only of bribery and in the kingdom the strong oppressed the weak.³ This indicates that the king had to maintain an efficient control over the amaccas to prevent them from abusing their power to further their own ends and cause disaffection among the people.

* * * *

We may now discuss at some length the high officers of state immediately associated with the king, officers who could have been included in the council of amaccas if such a formal body existed at all.

The highest office was that of the uparāja (Skt. yuvarāja), the 'sub-king'. The two terms uparaja⁴ and uvaraja⁵ are found in the earliest inscriptions. It is not clear whether these terms were synonymous or indicated two different offices. In the later Anuradhapura period both terms occur with identical meaning

1. Cv.38.4-5

2. Cv.39.34-35

3. Cv.41.67-68

4. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

5. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.133 (62)

but there are instances when uparāja and yuvarāja were two different persons holding office simultaneously.¹ Perhaps such may have been the case at an earlier period too.

Paṇḍuvāsudeva consecrated his eldest son as uparāja who ascended the throne at his father's death.² The uparāja of Devānampiya Tissa was his brother Mahānāga. The king's consort in order to secure the throne for her own son conspired to poison the uparaja. It so happened that the prince on whose account this crime was perpetrated fell victim to it; alarmed at this the uparāja escaped to Rohana to save his life.³ An inscription at Kusalānakaṇḍa mentions an uparaja Mahanaga and his son raja Abaya.⁴ Paranavitana identifies this uparaja Mahanaga with the brother of Devānampiya Tissa who fled to Rohana.⁵ But according to the chronicle the son of Mahānāga was a prince named Tissa (Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa) and not a prince named Abhaya.⁶ Two inscriptions, one at Rūgam⁷ and another at Deviyannekema,⁸ both in Rohana, name Yaṭṭhālayaka Tissa as the son of Mahānāga thus confirming the tradition in the chronicle. However we have already cited instances where the names of kings given as Tissa in the chronicle are found as Abhaya in the inscriptions and vice versa, where the term Abhaya was a title rather than a name.⁹ Hence the information in the chronicle that Mahānāga's son was Tissa and not

1. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.367

2. Mv.9.12; Mv.9.29

3. Mv.22.2-6

4. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

5. UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.153-154

6. Mv.22.10

7. AIC.p.75 (24)

8. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

9. See above, p. 30

Abhaya does not stand in the way of Parānavitana's identification of the rulers mentioned in the Kusalānakaṇḍa inscription. Thus we have evidence to support the supposition that Mahānāga remained uparāja in Rohana even after his flight. Bhātikābhaya's younger brother Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga was the uparāja in Rohana; the uvaraja Naka in the Kiriṇḍa Tissamahārāma inscriptions refers to this prince,¹ who ascended the throne after Bhātikābhaya.² The uvaraja Naka of the Hābāssa inscription in the Buttala Korale of the Ūva Province, has been identified with the king who succeeded Gajabāhu and was known as Mahallaka Nāga.³ All this information leads us to two important conclusions; first, that the uparāja was the heir-apparent from the earliest times and second, that he was commissioned with the administration of Rohana, for all the inscriptions referring to uparaja occur in Rohana.

The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā hints at the practice of reigning Indian monarchs designating their sons as uparāja.⁴ The chronicle states that Paṇḍuvāsudeva consecrated his son uparāja.⁵ Even though one may reject the evidence of this mythical king, the event recorded may only be setting down a custom which was in practice in the early centuries before and after Christ when the tradition was written down.

A Brahmi inscription at Situlpavuva refers to maha uvaraja Tisa aya.⁶ The exact significance of this term is hard to establish. If maha is taken to denote 'chief' or 'foremost' it would follow that there was more than one uparāja. According to the

1. JRAS.CB.XXXVI. No.98, pp.61-65

2. Mv.34.68

3. EZ.IV.pp.214-217

4. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. IV.p.88

5. Mv.9.12

6. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.133 (62)

Vamsatthappakāsinī, when Dīghagāmanī had visited the court of Panduvāsudeva he was appointed to serve at the royal court along with the uparāja and was invested with the title of uparāja.¹ This may refer to a custom prevalent in the early centuries of our era, and if the possibility that there was more than one uparāja is accepted mahauvaraja (Skt. mahāyuvarāja) denotes the chief among them.

Two Brahmi inscriptions at Kandegamakāṇḍa and Vessagiriya² refer to maha aya; mahayā or its variant mahapā or māpā, was the term used in the inscriptions for the princes known in the chronicles as yuvarāja in the later Anuradhapura period.³ Maha aya means 'chief or the foremost' of ayas. Mahayā was regarded as a corruption of mahādipāda, a term which appears frequently in the Cūlavamsa as a designation given to the heir-apparent, until Paranavitana pointed out that this is a mistranslation of the Sinhalese term into Pali.⁴ He points out that maha-aya with the honorary suffix paya (maha-aya-paya) was mistranslated into Pali as mahādipāda and that mahayā is only a contraction of maha-aya.⁵ Thus yuvarāja (uparāja) designated the heir-apparent in both early and later literary and epigraphic records; Mahayā appears in the early inscriptions but not in association with yuvarāja until the later Anuradhapura period. Hence it is difficult to say whether the yuvarāja held the rank of mahayā in the early period.

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.277. Ll.5-7

2. CALR.III.p.209 (4); EZ.I.pp.20 ff

3. EZ.III.p.82-83, Cf.also, UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.365-367

4. EZ.III.pp.82-83

5. Ibid.

After the first century A.D. there is only one reference to an uparāja (uvaraja) the already mentioned uvaraja Naka in the Hābāssa inscription.¹ This uvaraja Naka does not refer to his overlord Gajabāhu in his donative record, and this differs from the practice of yuvarājas in the last phase of the Anuradhapura kingdom,² perhaps indicating the comparative independence of the provincial ruler of Rohana. An important fact is revealed by the Vamsatthappakāsinī which says that the successor of Gajabāhu, Mahallakanāga, was the senāpati of Gajabāhu before his accession.³ Thus the office of uparāja merged with that of the senāpati at least in this particular instance, and perhaps this is why uvaraja Naka paid little heed to his overlord in the document where his donation is registered.

The senāpati was one of the most powerful and influential positions in the whole administration. A senāpati is first mentioned in the Mahāvamsa during the time when Paṇḍukābhaya was at war with his uncles.⁴ This office was conferred on Mahā Aritṭha, one of the envoys sent to Aśoka by Devanāṃpiya Tissa.⁵ Again we hear of a senāpati named Dīghasandha in the reign of Devanāṃpiya Tissa;⁶ he must have been appointed when Mahā Aritṭha entered the order.⁷ The chronicles do not mention which of the

1. EZ.IV.pp.213-217

2. For instance, Puliyañkulama Slab inscription of Udā mahayā, EZ.I.p.185 ff, esp. Lj.1-6,22-23

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.657. L.11

4. Mv.10.71

5. Mv.11.25

6. Mv.15.212

7. Mv.16.10-11

paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was the senāpati, but inscriptions reveal that Nandimitta was succeeded in that post by Phussadeva.¹ Phussadeva continued to be the senāpati of Saddhā Tissa as well and the office passed to the son-in-law of Phussadeva, named Aggidatta.² In the reign of Khallatānāga also we hear of a senāpati.³ A first century inscription found at Hittaragamahinna mentions a senāpati named Asalaya.⁴ A Lambakaṇṇa was the senāpati of the usurper Sabha; this senāpati fell in the battle field fighting against his nephew Vasabha who captured the throne.⁵ The senāpati of Gajābāhu was his cousin and brother-in-law; he held the position of uvaraja and later ascended the throne under the name of Mahallakanāga.⁶ A mahasenavita (P.mahāsenāpati) named Nakaya (Nāga) is mentioned in one of the inscriptions found at Mihintale and dated in the second century.⁷ The Nelugala inscription which is dated in the reign of Kaniṭṭha Tissa mentions the king's senāpati Ahali.⁸ The Mahāvamsa mentions senāpatīs in the reigns of Kuṇḍanāga, Vijaya Kumāra and Sangha Tissa.⁹

The senāpati held a very important and powerful position in the administration. The inscriptions of the senāpati of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī are found in places far removed from each other¹⁰ and

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1. AC.432-433 (47); EZ.V.p.237 (3), p.251 f; ASCAR.1934, J 18 (71,ii) JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130 (21); JCBRAS.NS.V.pp.139-140
 2. JCBRAS.NS.V.pp.139-140
 3. Mv.33.33
 4. UCR.VIII.p.117
 5. Mv.35.59-60, 69
 6. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.657, L.11; EZ.IV.pp.213-217
 7. This inscription does not appear in the collection of published inscriptions from Mihintale in the EZ.V., but is referred to by Nicholas. UCR.VIII.p.117
 8. ASCAR.1897 p.15
 9. Mv.36.21; 36.63; 36.72
 10. His inscriptions are found at Vavuniyāva, Situlpavuva, and Kuḍumbigala, see above, p. 107

donations in such far flung places in the Island show the power and wealth enjoyed by the senāpati. We have already seen that the post of senāpati remained unchanged even after the death of the king.¹ Again close relatives held the post one after the other.² Such situations would have increased the power of the senāpati.

It is clear from the Pali commentaries that the senāpati was regarded as the highest judicial authority below the king. For the Papañcasūdanī states that if the viniccaya mahāmacca could not decide a case then he would refer it to the senāpati before sending it to the king.³ This is in concert with the practice in India in Buddha's time.⁴ The Papañcasūdanī also states that the senapati was regarded as the head of the amaccas (amaccānaṃ jeṭṭhako hutvā);⁵ the senāpati was the highest place to which a person born in an amacca family could aspire to.⁶

The senāpati had become so powerful that he sometimes became a threat to the king. In the reign of Khallaṭṭanāga the senāpati Mahāratṭhaka captured the throne by coup d'etat, but was soon deposed by the younger brother of the king, Vatṭhagāmanī.⁷

1. See above, p. 157

2. See above, p. 157

3. Papañcasūdanī, II.p.252, The commentator writes this in explanation of an incident in the time of the Buddha. But the text shows that he was describing things according to what was known to him in his own times.

4. Fick, Social Organisation in North-East India.p.146

5. Papañcasūdanī.II.p.122

6. Papañcasūdanī.V.p.14

7. Mv.33.33-34, see for the discrepancy of the name UCR.VII.p.194

Of the seven Tamils who invaded the Island and captured the throne after driving away Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya, four are described as senāpatis, each obtaining the throne after betraying his master only to be betrayed in turn by his own senāpati.¹ More successful was the senāpati of Kuñcanāga who took up arms against the king and conquered the throne; he reigned in the Island as Sirināga (I).² Sangha Tissa, the senāpati of Vijaya Kumāra, murdered the king and, with the aid of his two accomplices, Sirisaṅghabodhi and Gothābhaya, ascended the throne.³

Perhaps because of this enormous power held by the senāpati, kings always tried to give the position to close blood relations. The senāpati of Devānaṃpiya Tissa was his nephew Mahā Ariṭṭha.⁴ The senāpati of Gajabāhu was his cousin and brother-in-law.⁵ Sirināga, the senāpati of Kuñcanāga, was his wife's brother according to the chronicle; the Vessagiriya inscription furnishes the information that Sirināga was his cousin as well.⁶ This policy was followed in the subsequent period. The senāpati of Dhātusena was his nephew and son-in-law.⁷

However the appointment to the post of senāpati of a prince closely related to the king must have tended to add still more prestige and power to this office. Nevertheless, the comparatively

1. Mv.33.56-60

2. Mv.36.21-23

3. Mv.36.63-64

4. Mv.11.20, 25

5. Vamsatthappakāsinī, p.657.L, 11; EZ.IV.pp.213-217

6. Mv.36.21; EZ.IV.pp.218-222

7. Cv.38.81

few instances of senāpatis betraying the king, as recorded in our documents, show that in spite of the enormous power that this office involved by and large it served the purpose for which it was devised.

The command of the army gave the senāpati this power, but some kings like Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī and perhaps Gajabāhuka Gāmaṇi commanded the army themselves. We thus get a situation where the senāpatis wield less power under warrior kings and rather more power under peace-loving rulers.

The office of dovārika or more properly jetṭhadovārika or mahadoratana represented a high rank in the court from the most ancient times. According to the Mahābodhivaṃsa the office originated when Devānampiya Tissa appointed the jetṭha of the balatthakulas (families of palace guards) to the post.¹ The dovārikas are mentioned only rarely in our records, but dovārika or mahadoratana is a position of honour and not a mere door-keeper. He had access to the king and had to be very trustworthy. King Devānampiya Tissa entrusted the government to the Bodhāhārakulas and himself became the dovārika for a short time when the Bodhi tree was brought to the Island.² A dovārika was promoted to the throne by queen Anulā whose paramour he became for a short period.³ After this we hear of dovārika Datta, whose son dovārika Sabha captured the throne from Yasalālaka Tissa.⁴

1. Mahābodhivaṃsa. p.167

2. Smp.p.99

3. Mv.34.18

4. Mv.35.51-56

Fick places the dovārika among the lowest ranks of courtiers,¹ but Kauṭilya recommends that the dovārika receive twice the salary of a member of the council of ministers.² This is a clear indication of the high place accorded to this office in Indian royal court. Hocart states that in ancient times the doorkeeper was not a mere menial but a man of consequence.³

A Brahmi inscription found at Kaduruvāva⁴ shows that this was the case in Ceylon too; there were lesser dovārikas termed dorakani under a chief dovārika who was known as mahadoratana. This is equivalent to the jettha dovārika mentioned in the chronicle.⁵ According to this inscription this family of mahadoratana held the rank of amaccas for five generations under six kings over a period of a hundred years.⁶ Apart from being amaccas some members of the family held some other high offices as well.⁷ This is conclusive proof that dovārika was an honoured position in ancient Ceylon.

There seems to have been a host of lesser dovārikas under the mahadoratana. They were known as balatthas (palace guards) and thirty two balatthas are mentioned in the time of Anulā.⁸ The

1. Fick, Social Organisation in North-East India, pp.154 ff

2. Arthaśāstra, Bk.V.ch.iii.247

3. Hocart, Kings and councillors. p.248

4. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

5. Mv.34.18

6. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

7. Ibid.

8. Mv.34.27, Geiger omits the line 'dvattimsāya balatthehi kattukāmā yathārucci,' See Colombo edition of the Mahāvamsa. Cf. also the text of the Mahāvamsa given in the Vamsatthappakāsinī, edited by Malalasekara.p.627

chief dovārika who held the high rank at the court seems to have commanded this small band of guards.

The Pali commentaries furnish us with some information about the nature of the work that the dovārikas were expected to discharge. The Papañcasūdanī records that anybody who wished to see the king had to obtain permission from the dovārika and the dovārika could refuse access to the king to any person who did not fulfil the conditions of such an audience.¹ The Paramatthadīpanī informs us that without a prior order (āṇatti) from the king no one could enter the royal house-hold where there were dvārapālakas.² According to the Atthasālinī when gifts were brought to the king they reached the king through dovārikas and the person who brought them was not presented to the king.³ Thus it seems that at least at the beginning, the dovārika's duties were more or less confined to the protection of royal house-hold and the king's person.

But as time went on the activities of the dovārika appear to have been extended. The Samantapāsādikā states that the dovārika interrogated only the people who passed through the city portals and not all the people who were inside or outside the city.⁴ The Visuddhimagga has a similar explanation of the term.⁵ Thus from being palace guards the dovārikas developed into the guards of the

1. Papañcasūdanī III.p.313

2. Paramatthadīpanī (Simon Hewavitarana Bequest Series 2) p.269

3. Atthasālinī. p.279

4. Smp.p.422

5. Visuddhimagga. p.281

whole city and the chief of them, the mahadoratana or jetthadovārika, must have been elevated in his position because of this. It is no wonder then that a family of dovārikas (mahadoratanas) overthrew the king and established themselves on the throne in the reign of Yasalālaka Tissa even though they themselves were overthrown by another upstart within a short time.¹

After this even the chronicles do not refer to dovārikas, but there is no evidence that the office went out of existence; for the Cūlavamsa mentions geharakkhakas or watchmen of the palace in the reign of Sirimeghavanna,² who may be identified with the balatthas of the earlier chronicle. In the reign of Moggallāna a dvāranāyake was a person who treated kindly the king's father, Dhātusena, in the hour of his distress, and was appointed by the king to that rank as a mark of grace.³

The king's treasurer must have occupied a very important place in the royal court, but there are only a few references to this office. The first reference to a bhāṇḍāgārika in the Mahāvamsa comes as late as the time of Sanghabodhi.⁴ One of the envoys of Devānampiya Tissa is called a ganaka and Geiger takes this as equivalent to treasurer.⁵ Ganaka mahāmatta is used in the Pali canon in this sense⁶ but there is one difficulty in

1. Mv.35.51-56; EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15); Mv.35.59-69

2. Cv.37.71

3. Cv.38.96; Cv.39.38-39

4. Mv.36.91

5. Mv.11.20, Geiger's Mv.Tr.p.78

6. Dīgha Nikāya.III.pp.64,148,153,169,171,177.
Cf.also, Pali Dictionary. sv. PTS.

identifying these two: ganakas are a separate class of officers in the inscriptions.¹ Inscriptions often refer to baḍagarikas and among them two are expressly described as king's treasurers.² One of these refers to the treasurer of Vatthagāmaṇi Abhaya.³ We know from the Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa that during the time of this king a treasurer was entrusted with the administration of some provinces.⁴ Even before that a bhāṇḍāgārika is mentioned in the reign of Saddhā Tissa in the Sīhalavatthuppakaraṇa.⁵ An inscription at Torava Mayilāva in Vanni Hat Pattu in the Kurunegala District refers to a panita badagarika of a maharaja.⁶ The real meaning of the word panita is difficult to establish. If it can be taken as an equivalent of Skt. pranīta or pariniṣṭhā⁷ the person may have occupied the highest place among a host of lesser baḍagarikas. But this does not explain why the more popular term used in such instances, maha, is avoided.

The bhāṇḍāgārika must have held great power because of his authority over the treasury. The only bhāṇḍāgārika mentioned in the Mahāvamsa ousted the king and established himself on the throne.⁸

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1. A ganaka is mentioned in an inscription in the second century A.D. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.141(6) A nagara ganaka or city accountant is mentioned in the time of Gajabāhu. EZ.III.p.116
 2. ASCAR.1911-12 p.94 No.2 (ii), p.96(16), p.98 No.4 (iii) No.5, No.6; ASCAR.1934. J 18, (71,iii); EZ.V.p.211(3), p.214-215(22); p.224(69,70); UCR.VIII.p.122 note 70
 3. ASCAR.1934 J 18, (71,iii)
 4. Ssvp.pp.176-177
 5. Svp.pp.115-119
 6. UCR.VIII.p.122
 7. Sanskrit Dictionary. sv. Monier Williams.
see also panita, Pali Dictionary. sv. PTS.
 8. Mv.36.91-98

An inscription found at Riṭigala mentions a mahamata named Bamadata.¹ Another at Uddhakandara near Tissamahārāma mentions a mahamata named Tisa.² It is difficult to decide whether this is derived from the Sanskrit mahāmātya (P. mahāmacca) 'principal minister' or from mahamātra, a title well known from the Mauryan administration.

Mahamata occurs in the Pali commentaries too. The Samantapāsādikā explains mahāmatta as thānantarappatto mahāmacco (mahāmacca holding high office).³ The text draws a distinction between these two terms, but the Samantapāsādikā also uses the two terms as synonyms.⁴ Hence the commentaries do not determine whether or not the two terms had different connotations.

The Kaduruvāva Brahmi inscription mentions maha ametiya which is the equivalent of the mahāmātya (P. mahāmacca).⁵ This suggests that mahamata may have been different from mahāmātya which is further supported by the fact that the word amate, amete or made stands as the equivalent of amātya.⁶ The term never occurs in the inscriptions except for the two epigraphs already mentioned and the office may not have lasted long in Ceylon.

If there was a distinction between mahāmātras and mahāmāccas it is important to identify the duties of the former. In the Arthaśāstra mahāmātras appear as heads of various government

1. EZ.I.p.150

2. UCR.VIII.p.118

3. Smp.309

4. Cf. also, Smp. p.996, p.294

5. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

6. Ibid.

departments.¹ In the Aśokan inscriptions they act in various departments of public life from ambassadors to foreign countries down to moral advisers of the public.² The Vinaya Piṭaka mentions senānāyake mahāmattas (army Commanders) and vohārika mahāmattas (ministers of justice).³ The Samantapāsādikā refers to vohārika mahāmatta who functioned during the time of the Buddha in India.⁴ The mahāmātras in Ceylon may have discharged similar duties.

Another important category of state officers was that of the adekas (Skt. adhyakṣa). Four adhyakṣas are mentioned in our inscriptions and the term has been rendered as 'superintendent'.⁵ There are references to asa adekas (Skt. aśvādhyakṣa), ati adeka (haṣṭyādhyakṣa), sivika adeka (Skt. sivikādhyakṣa), and pakara adekas (Skt. prakārādhyakṣa or prākārādhyakṣa).⁶ It is difficult to decide whether the superintendents came directly under the king and were counted as belonging to the ranks of amaccas or whether they were officers of less consequence.

The purohita does not seem to have enjoyed the privileged position he was accorded in the royal court of Indian kings, which is quite understandable in a Buddhist society. But this office can be traced back in Ceylon to a very early period and is mentioned in the chronicles on several occasions. On the other hand, although there are references to Brahmanas in the early Brahmi inscriptions the office of purohita is not mentioned. The explanation for this

1. Arthaśāstra. Bk.II. passim.

2. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. I.p.xl

3. Mahāvagga. 1. 40

4. Smp.p.296

5. EZ.V.p.242 (14), see also note. 3

6. EZ.V.p.242 (14); EZ.V.p.410 (7); CJSG.II.p.194 (564) see also UCR.VIII.p.122, see also, note.67; EZ.V.p.226 (77) see also note.1

apparent irregularity seems to be that the Brahmanas who held the rank of purohita would not have made grants to the Sangha.

The Vijaya legend mentions a purohita named Upatissa who was the founder of the Upatissa gāma and acted as the caretaker of the Island with the help of the amaccas, until the arrival of the Kṣatriya prince, when Vijaya died without an issue.¹ The Paṇḍukābhaya legend also mentions a purohita named Canda who was the son of the king's teacher and was appointed to that post by the king.² In the reign of Devānaṃpiya Tissa the office of purohita was conferred on the Brahmana who was one of the envoys sent to Aśoka.³ The Dīpavaṃsa mentions a daughter of a purohita who entered the order in the reign of Kākavaṇṇa Tissa.⁴ Again a Brahmana purohita fell victim to queen Anulā, whose paramour he became for a while; he was elevated to the throne for a short period only to be poisoned by her in his turn.⁵

In Buddhist literature the purohita was a friend, adviser, and companion of the king, as well as his domestic priest.⁶ The most important function of the Brahmana purohita in the royal household appears to have been to conduct the ceremonies such as those connected with marriage, birth, and death in which Buddhist

1. Mv.7.44; 8.4-5, The Mahāvamsa states amaccas ruled the country making upatissagāma their head quarters. But the Rājāvaliya states that Upatissa became the king. (p.14). The amaccas making Upatissa-gāma ^{their headquarters} when Vijaya died shows that they ruled the country taking Upatissa as their head.

2. Mv.10.79

3. Mv.11.26

4. Dv.18.20-22

5. Mv.34.24-27

6. Fick, Social Organisation in North-East India. pp.164-179

monks took no part.¹ In addition he performed the abhiṣeka ritual.²

The purohita had much importance if not actual power; sometimes he was even elevated to the throne itself. The Mahāvamsa records a tradition that when Vijaya died the amaccas ruled the country making Upatissagāma, the colony of Upatissa the purohita, their headquarters.³ Although we may not attach much credence to such a legend it certainly suggests the high place accorded to the purohita. The purohita, who seems to have been appointed by the king,⁴ may have represented the Brahmanic community in the country, whose existence is attested by epigraphical data.⁵

Astrologers and other soothsayers appear to have been regular visitors to the royal court. The chronicles often mention them as nemittakas, termed nakkhattapāṭhakas by some later writers.⁶ The kings sought their advice, often adhering to it, when they were faced with unusual problems.⁷ An inscription from Hiriyaḷa Hat Pattu, Kurunegala District, mentions a parumaka nakatika Tisa.⁸ The nemittakas and nakkhattapāṭhakas in the chronicles and the nakatikas of the inscriptions may indicate the same function. Although the soothsayers were not officers and had no power, their influence

1. UCR.VIII.p.261

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī. pp.305-306

3. Mv.8.4-5

4. Mv.10.79

5. UCR.VIII.pp.259-263

6. Rsv.p.217 (8-5)

7. Mv.9.2-4; 22.42-47; 35.71-72

8. CJSG.II.p.214 (672)

cannot be minimised in a society where even today the horoscope is still consulted in every major event of life.

After the first century A.D. a few new officers appear on the scene, perhaps due to the more centralised form of government established under the line of Vasabha.¹

Raṭiyas rank first among the new high officers. We have anticipated the origin of the raṭiya in discussing the disappearance of the title parumaka.² The epigraphical data shows that this new official grew steadily in importance. A rāstriya figures as a provincial ruler during the time of the Maurya king Chandragupta³ and during the period of the Guptas.⁴ In India they ranked below viśayapatis and above the headmen of villages, but since the division of viśaya was absent in Ceylon, raṭiyas were counted among the top officials entrusted with the administrative divisions. As the term indicates, the duties of the raṭiya must have been restricted to provincial administration; the relationship of the raṭiya either with the king or with the more prominent provincial administrators who were reckoned as amaccas is not clear owing to lack of evidence.

Some light is shed on this problem by the fact that the same term is used to denote the function of a provincial administrator whether he be an amacca or a raṭiya. For instance, we may compare

1. See below, pp. 244. ft.

2. See above, pp. 116-7

3. Epigraphia Indica.VIII.p.43

4. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.III.p.32 note.7. (Text and Tr.)

the terms Nakadiva bujameni and Pajinakara bujameni recorded in two inscriptions referring to two amaccas¹ and Huvahaka bujanakalahi referring to a raṭiya.² All these three instances use a term derived from Sanskrit bhuj meaning enjoyment, rule or government. This usage of a common term may indicate that amaccas and raṭiyas acting as provincial governors held similar powers and discharged similar functions. They may have been on the same footing at least as far as provincial government is concerned, as may be supported by the Line Malai inscription of the time of Kaniṭṭha Tissa.³ This inscription mentions a raṭiya, the provincial ruler of Ūva, who bought a certain tank and donated dakapati (water share) after remitting kara (the king's dues) to the Cittalapabbata Vihara. Thus this provincial governor had the power to remit kara, but private documents use the causative form of the verb, karakāḍavaya, and only the king's documents contain the direct verb karakāḍaya, implying thereby that only the king had this right.⁴ Since the Line Malai inscription uses the direct form the raṭiya of the province of Huvahaka (Ūva) exercised this power on behalf of the king, which indicates the important place accorded to the office.

Another important group of officials that emerged or acquired importance during this period was the office of bojiyas or bojikas (Skt. bhojaka). Under the imperial Guptas bhoga was a technical territorial term in India and bhogika, which has the literal

1. EZ.IV.p.237; Unpublished, referred to by Nicholas, UCR.VIII.p.120

2. UCR.VIII.p.127

3. UCR.VIII.p.127

4. EZ.III.pp.117-118

meaning of one who enjoys or possesses, is connected with the territorial terms bhoga and bhukti.¹ In India bhogikas came between sāmantas and viśayapatis,² and it would seem that bhojakas in Ceylon would have had some relationship to this contemporary institution in the subcontinent. But it is not certain that the bhojakas in Ceylon had any connexion with a territorial division. A Rohana-bhojaka is mentioned in one of the inscriptions belonging to the second century A.D. found at Tissamahārāma.³ A third-century inscription found at Devanādi Hat Pattu refers to a bojiya named Gutaya residing at Malaya.⁴

It is not certain whether the bhojakas were provincial administrators or whether their sphere of activity was limited to a specific branch of administration, such as revenue collection. The Samantapāsādikā refers to bhojakas as those who receive bali or royal dues;⁵ and perhaps in Ceylon the bhojakas may have been concerned with revenue administration rather than with civil government, as is indicated by the statement of the Samantapāsādikā. The existence of a special group of officials for provincial administration supports this argument.

The kammikas or rājakammikas were closely connected with bojikas (if they were revenue administrators). Subhadeva is said to have alienated the people from the king by acting as a rājakammika

1. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. III.p.100, note. 2 (Text and Tr.)

2. Ibid.

3. CJSG.II.p.24 (391) see also, p.18 (391)

4. CJSG.II.p.128 (539)

5. Smp.p.1051

and exacting undue taxes from the people.¹ That kammikas acted as the king's revenue officers is supported by the Cūlavamsa statement that Mahānāga was appointed as Rohanakammika and collected many goods from that province.²

The Godavāya inscription of Gajabāhu supplies definite evidence of the existence of some kind of customs officers.³ Since even at Godavāya, a small port at the mouth of the Valave river, customs duties were levied, all the other major ports may have had their own customs officers. An episode related by Cosmos corroborates this evidence; he states that some western merchants who visited Ceylon were brought before the king by magistrates and customs house officials in accordance with the custom of the place.⁴

Lekhakas or scribes gained importance during this period, and there may be a connexion between these officials and the Lambakannas.⁵ A daughter of a scribe was regarded as sufficiently important to be eligible to become a king's wife.⁶ If one accepts the interpretation given to the term kanapethika by Paranavitana, viz., archivist, the office of scribes may be

1. Vamsatthappakāsini. p.663, L1.20-23

2. Cv.41.86

3. CJSG.II.p.197 (586)

4. M'Crindle, Ancient India As Described in Classical Literature. 1901. pp.162 f

5. See above, p. 131

6. Mv.37.26

traced back to an earlier date.¹ A mahalena or a chief secretary made a grant within a century after our period.²

Thus the king was assisted by a body of officials in carrying out the administration; they were known as amaccas, a term which is equivalent to courtier. As the king's advisers they acted in concert but it is not certain whether or not there was a formal council of ministers in these early days. Some of the amaccas had special duties to perform in addition to their being advisers to the king. They acted as regents in the absence of a king and also took part in the important ceremony of coronation. With the passage of time the amaccas grew in numerical strength as well as in power. The fact that they became hereditary officials and enjoyed considerable economic affluence contributed much to their power. Large provinces such as Rohana which were under princes at an earlier date were entrusted to amaccas, who were appointed to discriminate between the major religious fraternities, the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiriya Vihara, on ideological issues. Many a time the king was baffled in his action when the amaccas stood in concert in his way and the king sometimes adopted ruthless measures to prevent the amaccas from getting out of hand.

Among the important officers of state the uparāja or yuvarāja figures foremost. He was the heir apparent and was charged with the administration of Rohana. The senāpati carried much power, being the Commander of the army and counterbalanced against the royal power. His activities were not confined to military functions and perhaps during the time of peace his work was more of judicial

1. EZ.V.p.415

2. CJSG.II.p.23 (384)

nature. The dovārika who commanded the small band of palace guards enjoyed a high position at the court; his functions were later extended to cover the protection of the whole city and this should have elevated the position of the dovārika. Though the baḍagarika must have held a very important place, being in charge of the royal treasury, the sources tell very little about this office. The mahāmattas were distinct from mahāmaccas and may have corresponded to the mahamātras in contemporary India. The exact position of the adhyakṣas is not very clear; they were the heads of various state departments in the Arthaśāstra. Though the purohita did not wield any power he must have influenced the king as he was a companion of the royal household, and finally the nemittakas or astrologers must have had their share in state affairs, particularly in a society which was laden with superstition.

With the extension of the administrative organisation under the new line of kings a few new offices came into being. The raṭiyas were the first of this group and were charged with the administration of raṭas; they were on the same level as the amaccas. Bojiyas were more concerned with revenue administration and they were helped in this by kammikas or rājakammikas. There must have been a host of royal customs officers, though the evidence for them is very meagre. The lekhakas or scribes represent the result of this complication of the administrative machinery. And it was by the proper manipulation of this hierarchical structure that the king made his subjects feel his sovereignty.

CHAPTER V

The Relationship between the King and the Sangha

In many ancient societies the offices of king and priest were identified. The priest also acted in the capacity of king and exercised authority over both the temporal and spiritual life of his subjects.¹ 'The distinctive feature of Indian kingship', states Heesterman, 'is the intimate connection of royal and priestly power The brahman power has been seen to be the womb from which again and again the royal power comes forth'.² According to the ideas of kingship among early Buddhists in India, spiritual and temporal powers were in two separate domains but each was expected to reinforce the other. In this context the Sangha became the 'repository of the conscience of the state'.³ It is against this background that we must study the relationship between the king and the Sangha in Ceylon.

We propose to examine this under three main aspects: first, the king and the Sangha i.e. the role played by the king in the affairs of the Sangha, second, the Sangha and the king i.e. the part played by the Sangha in the affairs of the king and third,

1. Ency.Rel.Eth. 7.p.726; 10.p.280; 12.p.327; Hocart. Kingship. pp.119 ff;

2. Heesterman, The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration. p.226

3. Gokhale, 'Early Buddhist Kingship', The Journal of Asian Studies.

the king versus the Sangha i.e. the various conflicts that arose between these two institutions.

The description in the chronicles of the establishment of the Sasana in the Island is vivid and inspiring. The account of the Mahāvamsa in particular is comprehensive and describes in detail the activities of the thera from the date of his arrival in the Island.¹ These details may be later accretions added mainly to bring about 'serene joy of the pious'; scholars have already shown that Buddhism could not have been unknown in the Island before the visit of thera Mahinda.² The members of the Theriya sect who met together and codified their doctrines in a final form at Patalīputra in the reign of Aśoka³ would have seen great possibilities of spreading the faith in the Island when they heard of the arrival of Ceylonese ambassadors at the emperor's court to solicit a consecration.⁴ This was therefore an appropriate time for the visit of Elder Mahinda and his followers to convert the royalty of the Island.⁵ Devānampiya Tissa's initial partiality towards Mahinda may well have been

1. Mv.chs. 13-19 passim.

2. S.C. Raul, 'Pre-Vijayan Legends and Traditions Pertaining to Ceylon' JRAS.CB XXXI. No.82. pp.281 ff; EHBC. pp.45-48.

3. Mv.ch.5. passim.

4. See above. pp. 37 ff.

5. Mv.13.12-14

inspired, at least in part, by his gratitude to the emperor.¹ The Vamsatthappākasinī lends support to this view.² The simple historical truth which lies beneath the undergrowth of legend and miracle of the story of the mission to Ceylon is that when Tissa heard of the arrival of the emperor's son in the hermitage at Cetiyapabbata he accorded him a stately reception.³ This was the beginning of the close connexion between the royalty of the Island and the Sangha.

Devānampiya Tissa took many measures which contributed towards establishing the Sasana on a firm footing. He donated the Royal park to the Sangha and later erected various buildings in it for their use.⁴ He ordered the preparation of caves at Cetiyapabbata for the monks to stay during the rainy season⁵ and built in the capital a stūpa containing the relics of the great Master⁶, which became a place of worship. Thereafter he sent messengers to bring a branch of the sacred Bodhi tree which was planted in the Mahāmeghavana park already donated to the Sangha.⁷

1. See above, pp. 37 ff

2. "sahāyassa me kira Dhammāsokassa rañño putto ajja me janapadaṃ āgacchi, taṃ me mahā labho; ito paṭṭhāy' ahaṃ janaṃ gahetvā kalyāṇakammaṃ ca karissāmi; tassa hetu puṇyātanaṃ pūjessāmi" ti Vamsatthappākāsini. p.334, Ll.26-30.

3. Cf. EHBC.p.51

4. Mv.15.25; 15.202-211

5. Mv.16.12

6. Mv.ch.17

7. Mv.18.1-5; 19.41 ff.

The bhikkhuni Sasana was established and Viharas were built for the nuns within the capital itself.¹

The kings who followed Devānampiya Tissa took an equal interest in religious activities; when the country fell under a foreign yoke the first task of the liberators was to rehabilitate the Sasana. Thus when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī freed the country from foreign domination they took a special care to reinstate the Sasana in its former glory.²

The kings in their enthusiasm to spread the Sasana tried to become preachers themselves. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya tried to preach the doctrine to the brotherhood at Lohapāsāda but could not proceed because of his deference to the Sangha.³ Then he made provision for the preaching of the doctrine throughout the whole Island, providing necessities of life for the preachers.⁴ What Duṭṭhagāmaṇī failed to do one of his successors did. Bhātika Abhaya delivered to the brotherhood at Lohapāsāda a sermon regarding the treasures enshrined in the relic chamber of the Mahācetiya,⁵ which he is supposed to have visited.⁶

1. Mv.19.65,68,71,77-84; Dv.18.1-46.

2. Mv.chs.26-32, passim; Mv.33.79-94

3. Mv.32.42-43

4. Mv.32.44-66

5. Vamsatthappakāsinī.pp.554-555

6. Mv.34.49-50; Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.554

The kings of the line of Vasabha made excessive land grants to the Sangha. This was started with Vasabha who made a thousand and eight karīṣas of land to Anurārāma, a share in water of the canal of Alisāra to the Mucela Vihara, and a pond yielding water to thousand karīṣas to the Sangha at the Galaṃbatitha Vihara.¹ Apart from the grants of land and fields and other sources of income made to the Sangha by the kings who succeeded Vasabha as recorded in the chronicles,² the inscriptions of Gajabāhu,³ Mahallakanāga,⁴ Bhātika Tissa,⁵ and Kaniṭṭha Tissa⁶ to mention a few among many, record donations to the community of monks. Such excessive grants to the Sangha were made possible for the kings because of the extensive irrigation works and the consequent expansion of cultivable land.⁷

As the leading lay patron of the Sangha the king took a great interest in religious festivals. The kings regularly held the Vesākha festival⁸ and in the time of Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga a new festival named Giribhaṇḍa pūjā was introduced.⁹

1. Mv.35.83-86

2. Mv.35.115-121; 36.20,32,38

3. EZ.I.p.211; EZ.III.p.116, p.166; CALR.III.p.215(12); CJSG.I.p.172(368); CJSG.II.p.215(675); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134(65)

4. ASC.SPR.1896.p.47(11); ASCAR.1911-12(supplement)p.93(12); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.157(7)

5. ASCAR.1892.p.9(8,37); ASCAR.1895.p.9(21)

6. ASC.SPR.1896.p.47 (111); JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134(66); Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation volume. p.64

7. See below, pp. 152 ff

8. Mv.32.35; 34.59; 35.100; 36.40,109,130

9. Mv.34.75-81

One of the popular religious ceremonies centred around the Bodhi tree;¹ the festivals around the Mahācetiya were also popular and during the time of Bhātika Abhaya were carried out on a grand scale.² In the reign of Vohārika Tissa a new festival named Ariyavaṃsa is mentioned.³ During the course of these religious festivals the kings lavishly distributed alms and cloths among the Sangha.⁴

A study of these religious festivals shows that although the chronicles make reference to them from the arrival of the Elder Mahinda and although they were purely religious ceremonies from the beginning, these were popular festivals converted by the kings to religious ceremonies. One of these was the popular water festival celebrated by the king after the consecration or on special occasions.⁵ The Samantapāsādikā states that on the day he was to meet the thera the king

1. Mv.34.58-59

2. Mv.34.40-48, 52-57

3. Mv.36.38; See Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, pp. 268 ff.

4. Mv.34.82-83; 36.38-39, 67, 131

5. For an instance when this is not connected with the abhiseka, see Mv.25.51; See above pp. 45-6

enjoined a festival in the city.¹ The Vamsatthappakāsini calls this Jetṭhamūla Nakkhatta² whereas the Mahāvamsa simply states that the king ordered a water festival and left for Missakapabbata to enjoy the game.³ Jetṭhamūla is the month of Poson when even today a regular annual ceremony is held in honour of the thera Mahinda. Perhaps it is this same ceremony that we come across as Giribhaṇḍa pūja in the reign of Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga. According to the Mahāvamsa this festival took place around the Cetiyapabbata Vihara.⁴ A ceremony of this name is never referred to at any other time. However in the reign of Sirimeghavanna there was a festival in which the king brought down from Cetiyapabbata an image of thera Mahinda in procession.⁵ The festival was held on

1. Smp.p.73

2. 'Jetṭhamūlamāsapunnāmayam nakkhattam ghosāpetvā', "Salilakīlāchanam karoṭhāti" nagaravāsinaṃ tam salilakīlam datvā ti a. attho', Vamsatthappakāsini. p.329, Ll.15-17

3. Mv.14.1

4. Mv.34.75-81, See Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon. pp. 275-276

5. Cv. 37.77-89

a grand scale and the king ordered it to be held every year.¹

It is possible that the Giribhaṇḍa pūjā was the same as the Mahinda festival celebrated in the reign of Sirimeghavanna.²

The more important point is that this was a popular water festival held by the king and was later converted into a religious ceremony.

1. Even when the Cūlavamsa was written the custom enjoined by Sirimeghavanna was carefully observed. Cv.37.88-89
2. The festival is called Giribhaṇḍagahana pūjā in the Dīpavamsa. (Dv.21.32) The description given in the Vamsatthappakāsinī (pp. 635-636) leaves little room for doubt that some sacred objects (bhaṇḍa) were taken (gahana) from the Cetiyaṭṭhapaṭṭa (Giri) and carried in procession to the capital along decorated roads. It is possible that before the idea of image worship was introduced some sacred objects connected with the great thera were carried in procession in the festival held in his honour. By the time of Sirimeghavanna image worship was prevalent and an image of Mahinda would have replaced such sacred objects. See also, Rahula, op.cit. pp.275 f

Still another religious ceremony which had been a popular festival was the Kārttika (P.kattika) festival. There is evidence that the Kārttikotsava prevailed in Ceylon before the advent of Buddhism. The cult of Cittaraja which we come across in the Raṇḍukābhaya legend¹ has been connected with the Kārttika festival,² a fertility cult of the type found among many primitive peoples.³ The festival was held in India on the full moon day of the month of Kārttika (Oct.-Nov.).⁴ It may be noted in this context that it was on the full moon day of the month of Kārttika that relics of the Master were brought and the erection of the first great Thūpa, that of Thūpārāma, was started amidst much celebrations.⁵ This ceremony had already become a religious festival in India by the time of Aśoka, if the Mahāvamsa is given credence.⁶ Thus this popular ceremony

1. Mv.9.22-23; 10.4,84,104

2. JRAS.CB.XXXI.No.82.p.304

3. Ency.Rel.Eth. 12.pp.704-705

4. Sanskrit Dictionary.sv.Monier Williams.

5. Mv.17.1 ff

6. The Mahāvamsa states that when Sumana Sāmanera visited king Aśoka to obtain relics the king was honouring the Bodhi tree with the offerings of the Kārttika festival.

Mv.17.17

might have continued year after year to commemorate the foundation of the Thūpārāma.

Why did the king take such an interest in religious activities? In the first place the king may have realised that obtaining the partiality of the Sangha secured the loyalty of his subjects. An important point to be stressed in this respect is that the Sangha comprised members from all sections of society. For, among those who first entered the order there were members of royalty,¹ nobility,² and the common people.³ The close connexion between the Sangha and the people is very obvious from the stories contained in the Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa,⁴ the Sīhalavatthuppakaraṇa,⁵ and Pali commentaries.⁶ In spite of the fact that these were works of monks who may well have exaggerated the regard in

1. Mv.16.10-11; 17.57-58, 19.65; Dv.18.21

2. Mv.20.14; Papañcasūdanī II.p.293-294

3. Mv.20.15

4. Ssvp.stories, 19,29,33,35

5. Svp.stories. 1,35,36

6. Manorathapūraṇī.II.pp.60-65, Cf.also, EHBC.p.130

which the Sangha was held by the people, one does get the impression of a surge of popular enthusiasm. Thus by spreading the faith, the king became popular among his subjects.

This was more apparent when the king took more interest in religious activities under adverse political conditions. When the northern kingdom was under an alien, King Kākavaṇṇa Tissa of Rohana took a great interest in religious activities.¹ The Dhātuvamsa deals in detail with his religious work at Seruvila.² If credence is given to the legend of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī as it is found in the chronicle his war against the northern kingdom assumed a religious garb.³ Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya held a religious festival before he marched against the invader.⁴ King Ilanāga took similar interest in the Sangha while he was an exile in Rohana when the Lambakaṇṇas held power.⁵ When it was prophesied that Vasabha would live a short life, he turned towards the Sangha to make it longer. Being a usurper who came to power by evicting another usurper Vasabha was undoubtedly striving to win the confidence of his subjects through the Sangha.⁶

1. Mv. 22.23 ff; 24.8-9

2. Dhātuvamsa. pp.27 ff

3. Mv. 25.2-3, 16-18

4. Mv. 33.67

5. Mv. 35.30-32

6. Mv. 35.71 ff

These instances at least show that the interest taken by the king in the advancement of the Sasana was not always decided by religious convictions alone.

The king's interest in religious festivals also shows political motives. In the first place religious ceremonies became a unifying force. This is particularly noticeable in the efforts of Devānampiya Tissa to bring princes from distant places such as Kājaragāma and Candanagāma to attend the Bodhi festival.¹ One wonders whether Devānampiya Tissa tried to impose a moral obligation upon these two distant royal houses in Rohana which recognised no loyalty to him; this may perhaps be regarded as a small scale application of the policy of dhamma vijaya.² It is also to be observed that some of the festivals like Vesākha and Ariyavaṃsa were held all over the Island.³ This must have contributed very much towards the idea of the unity of the whole Island under a single king.

When popular ceremonies were converted into religious festivals they gave the king an opportunity to appear in public and perhaps to display royal glamour. Apart from this such ceremonies turned out to be a common ground where the

1. Mv.19.54-55

2. Cf. R.Thapar, Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas. pp.167-169

3. Mv.32.35; 36.38-39, 40

ruler and the ruled met striving for a common cause, that of glorifying the faith they both avowed. Hence the religious ceremonies must have brought the king and the people very close to each other and the Sangha became a constant link between them. Therefore the more the king participated in such ceremonies the more he won the hearts of his people.

As the chief lay patron it was the king's duty to preserve the purity and the unity of the Sangha. This concept was not originated in Ceylon, for Aśoka acting in the same capacity admonished the Sangha that any person within the order who created a division in the community would be disrobed.¹ But the idea that the king should act as the preserver of the purity of the Sangha in the Island was not present from the very beginning and it was left for the Sangha to preserve the purity of the community in the early days. This is seen in the attitude of king Vātṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya regarding such an instance. When a charge of the breach of vinaya was brought against thera Mahātissa of Kupikkala who was a great favourite of the king, it was decided by the Sangha that the thera was guilty and though there were many bhikkhūs who did not accept the decision

1. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. I. pp. 159-163

of the Mahavihara, the king remained silent leaving the brotherhood to decide its own course.¹ But the king played a different role soon afterwards, for in the reign of Bhātika Abhaya when a dispute arose between the two monasteries, the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiri, regarding the interpretation of a vinaya rule the king assembled the brotherhood of the two fraternities and, finding it difficult to arrive at a settlement, appointed an amacca for that purpose. The amacca asked the brotherhood to recite their suttas and finally gave his verdict in favour of the Mahavihara.²

It may be observed here that the king had to play a double role of acting as the preserver of the purity of the Sangha as well as of the unity of the community of monks, with the emergence of a Vihara which did not accept the authority of the Mahavihara.³ In the reign of Kanirajānu Tissa the king interfered in a vinaya dispute which had arisen in the uposatha house.⁴ In the eyes of the king a dispute in the uposatha house meant danger not only to the purity of the Sasana but also to the unity of the Sangha. In the reign of Vohārika Tissa the bhikkhūs of the Abhayagiri hailed the Vaitulya doctrine coming from India, which the Mahavihara rejected as heresy. Accordingly the king interfered

1. Mv. 33.95-97; Nks. pp.65-66

2. Smp. pp.582-583

3. Mv. 33.95-97

4. Mv. 35.10.11

and appointed an amacca named Kapila to investigate the matter; the amacca decried the Vaitulya doctrine as heresy which was consequently condemned.¹ King Vohārika Tissa also spent a hundred thousand pieces of money to redeem the bhikkhūs in debt.² Again in the reign of Goṭhābhaya the king acted as the preserver of the purity of the Sasana when he stamped down the Vaitulya^{vā}ādis of Abhayagiri.³ The last instance of our period when the king was called upon to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs was when Mahāsena proclaimed an order against the bhikkhūs of the Mahavihara because they were without discipline.⁴ A fragmentary inscription found at Jetavana Vihara⁵ shows that even though the Mahāvamsa charged the king for acting indiscreetly under the spell of an evil friend,⁶ king Mahāsena acted in good faith and tried to preserve the purity of the Sasana. In this inscription the king enjoins the bhikkhūs of the Five Great Residences to behave themselves.⁷ It is stated that although the bhikkhūs had been rebuked they still continue to sin in various ways; they are blamed for causing disturbances against one another.⁸ This charge that Mahāsena brings against the

1. Mv.36.41; Nks.pp.66-67

2. Mv.36.39

3. Mv.36.111-112

4. Mv.37.4-5

5. EZ.IV.pp.273-285

6. Mv.37.3 ff

7. EZ.IV.pp.281-282

8. EZ.IV.p.282

bhikkhūs of the orthodox church agrees well with the charge given in the Mahāvamsa, i.e. lack of discipline under which the king imposed sactions against the inmates of the Mahavihara.¹ Thus the king as the chief lay patron was called upon to decide the correct behaviour for the Sangha according to the canon and impose it on them for their own good.

Perhaps the king would have had to take this position willy nilly; the impact of the Sangha on the laity was so intense that it made the king's interference in ecclesiastical matters imperative since any discord in the Sangha would bring disharmony among the people and sometimes between higher dignitaries.

When we look at this friendly relationship of the king and the Sangha from the side of the Sangha we may first emphasise the importance of the heterogeneous character of the community of monks in this respect. The Sangha represented a new element in the society, but it incorporated all the earlier elements as well.² Hence, the Sangha could influence the society at all levels. Besides they were the literati. For these reasons the king sought the advice of the Sangha which they were only too willing to give.

1. Mv.37.4-5

2. See above, p. 184

The close relationship between the king and the Sangha at a personal level must have been another reason for the king to seek their advice. The Sangha is called 'kuladevata', 'the family guardian spirits' of the royal house of Rohana. The two princes, Gāmaṇī and Tissa swore in the presence of the Sangha not to betray the kuladevatā.¹ Every ceremony connected with the two princes which otherwise would have been performed with the aid of Brahmanic priests was carried out in the presence of the Sangha,² some were performed in Viharas.³ The warriors of Kākayaṇṇa Tissa were sworn in the presence of the Sangha not to take sides if war broke out between the two brothers, Gāmaṇī and Tissa.⁴ This close personal relationship must have encouraged the king to seek the advice of the Sangha in difficult situations.

For all these reasons, the Sangha furnished informal advisers to the king from the time of the introduction of the faith into the Island. This began as the giving of advice

1. Mv. 22.80

2. Mv. 22.65-69, 74-77

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī. pp.443, Ll.18-20

4. Mv. 24.10-11

to the king on matters relevant to the establishment of the Sasana in the time of Mahinda and Devānāmpiya Tissa, but it soon extended to other spheres as well. Devānāmpiya Tissa first sought the advice of the thera Mahinda in religious matters such as the bringing of the Bodhi tree, securing relics of the Master to build religious monuments and so on.¹ The thera was invited to the court and the king held discussions with his amaccas along with the thera on such matters.² But soon this was extended to more secular

1. Mv. 18.1-2; 20.7-11

2. The text given in the Colombo edition is preferable to that given by Geiger. The Colombo edition has,

Mahābodhiṃ ca theriṃca ānāpetuṃ mahīpati
therena vuttavacanaṃ saramāno sake ghare
antovassekaṃ divasaṃ nisinno thera santike
sahāmaccehi mantetvā bhāgineyyaṃ sakam sayam

Geiger gives sake pure instead of sake ghare and translates the verse 'sitting in his own city with the thera' which is not very precise in its meaning. But if we give credit to the text given in the Colombo edition and translate the verse "the king sitting in his own palace with the thera" the verse carries a precise piece of information.

spheres. When the state elephant refused the fodder it was offered the king was quick to consult the thera on this veterinary question.¹ This tendency to seek advice in secular matters might well have been extended to the political sphere. When Gāmanī and Tissa were offered food as a token that they would not fight with the foreigner, they refused the food, and the Mahāthera present on that occasion upheld their stand and tried to pacify the aged king.² Saddhā Tissa pleaded with the Sangha to name a bhikkhu who would act in the capacity of an adviser to him.³

Most kings were specially attached to some learned thera whose advice they sought in difficulty. We have seen how Devānampiya Tissa depended heavily on the advice of the thera Mahinda in religious matters which was later extended to cover more secular fields. Saddhā Tissa held a thera named Kāla Buddharakkhita in high esteem.⁴ Mahāthera Kupikkala Tissa, the great friend of Vaṭṭhagāmanī Abhaya, aided the king in his adversity,⁵ and the king sought the Mahāthera's welfare when he released the kingdom from the alien yoke.⁶

1. Mv.19.72-75

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.445, Ll.16-19

3. 'Mamovādakaṃ bhikkhuṃ niddisathāti' Svp.p.138;
Cf.also, Manorathapūranī.II.pp.246-248

4. Papañcasūdanī.II.pp.293-295

5. Mv.33.49-53,67-77

6. Mv.33.82

Thera Mahāsumma enjoyed the great regard of King Mahācūlika Mahātissa.¹ Two theras named Tipiṭaka Cūlābhaya and Cūla Sudhamma were the favourites of Kuṭakanna Tissa.² The great favourite of King Kaniṭṭha Tissa was thera Mahānāga of Bhūtārāma.³ King Goṭhābhaya and his son Mahāsena were attached to the thera Sanghamitta whose advice they followed.⁴ Finally Kohon Tissa became the favourite of Mahāsena in the latter part of his reign.⁵ A story in the Visuddhimagga⁶ indicates that whenever the king heard of the existence of a pious thera he did everything possible to bring him to the capital and showered benefits on him.

In addition to advising the king on important issues, the Sangha was always ready to extend a helping hand to royalty in distress, for it did not take long for them to realise that the doom of the Sinhalese monarchy spelt the doom of the Sangha as well. Thus the Sangha helped members of the royalty and tried

1. Mv. 34.2-5

2. Sammohavinodanī. p.452

3. Mv. 36.7

4. Mv. 36.114-116; 37.1-9

5. Mv. 37.32-35

6. Visuddhimagga. pp.38-39

to bring unity in ruling circles. When the two princes in Rohana were at war with each other, which was disastrous for their goal of unifying the Sinhalese kingdom under a single banner, the Sangha interfered and brought about a settlement.¹ Not only did Saddhā Tissa remain faithful to his brother ever after but Duṭṭhagāmaṇī repaid him by gratefully entrusting the country to him and not to his own son at his death bed.² Vatthagamani fleeing before the incoming hordes of South Indian invaders received the help of the Sangha;³ and it was the Sangha who brought about a reconciliation between Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya and his dissident generals, without which the Sinhalese struggle against the occupying Tamils would have been a failure.⁴ When Anulā was in her hey-day and the country was thrown into confusion Kuṭakappa Tissa received the protection of the Sangha.⁵ Later when popular opinion was about to turn in favour of him the prince gave up his robes and murdered his way

1. Mv. 24.48-58

2. Mv. 32.2-3, 59-62; 33.1-4, see below, pp. 282-3

3. Mv. 33.47-53

4. Mv. 33.67-77

5. Mv. 34.28-29

to the throne.¹ The Sangha brought up Dhātusena, a nobleman belonging to the Maurya clan, even at the risk of their own lives, and set him about the task of driving away the Tamil invaders.²

Hocart points out that no state whose religion is ethical can tolerate local autonomy.³ The idea of a unified country under a single monarch may have come from or been supported by the Sangha. The idea of a unified state is found for the first time in the chronicle in the time of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya when it states that the idea of unifying the whole Island under a single ruler came from the heroic prince himself.⁴ But the legend of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was in continuous growth for some centuries and the author of the Mahāvamsa must have described some remote events according to the ideas prevalent in his own times. The unified state established in India under Maurya hegemony greatly facilitated the expansion of Buddhism in India. Whether or not we accept all the details of the patronage that Aśoka is supposed to have extended towards Theravāda bhikkhūs as they appear in the chronicles and in the commentaries, it is beyond doubt that Buddhism flourished under his rule. Since

1. Mv. 34.29-30

2. Cy. 38. 14 ff

3. Hocart, Kings and Councillors. p.82

4. Mv. 22.82-86, cf. also, Mv.25.71

Aśoka strove for the moral advancement of his subjects, his benefactions to the Sangha cannot be exaggerated even though these were not restricted to Buddhists alone.¹ The Kausambi, Sānchi, and Sārānāth Edicts establish that Aśoka took special interest in the affairs of the Buddhist community of monks.²

Apart from such direct help the Sangha would have derived great benefit from the unified state that flourished under the Mauryas and the consequent protection that it afforded. The Sangha may have envisaged the same possibilities in Ceylon, though on a smaller scale, under a single pious king. The need may have grown acute with the political and religious developments which followed the downfall of the Mauryas. Buddhist traditions are unanimous in stating that the Sungas persecuted Buddhism.³ Apart from this, Mahāyānic tendencies were gaining ground in India;⁴ the form of Buddhism that the Kuśānas supported was considered unorthodox by the Theravādins in Ceylon.⁵ These developments began some time before the Kuśānas. The Buddhist monks in Ceylon who were in contact

1. The History and Culture of Indian People.II

The Age of Imperial Unity, pp.75f

2. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. I.pp.159-163

3. Imperial Unity, op.cit. pp.97,383

4. Imperial Unity, op.cit.pp.385 ff

5. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.246; Paranavitana, 'Mahāyānism in Ceylon'

CJSG.II.pp.35-71

with the homeland of the faith may not have been ignorant of these new developments that were taking place in the subcontinent. Hence it is possible that the Sangha hoped to see the Island united under a single monarch who was devoted to their course, thus excluding any possibility of heresy obtaining favour in one of the rival royal houses.

These fears must have been aggravated by the occupation of north Ceylon by Tamils. Elāra was a just king¹ but not all his followers adhered to the noble ideals of their leader.² It is particularly interesting to note in this respect that when the two young princes refused to swear not to wage war on the foreigner, the Sangha upheld the stand taken by the princes.³ Considering all these factors it is not unlikely that the Sangha was behind the scene when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī made an all out attempt to unify the Island under a single king.

Because of this new alliance and the consequent religious enthusiasm on the part of the king the Anuradhapura kingdom was brought into prominence. The capital became the centre of all this religious activity. The important Viharas, the Mahavihara, the Cetiyapabbata Vihara and later the

1. Mv. 21.14 ff

2. Mv. 23.9

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.445, Ll.16-19

Abhayagiri Vihara were all built in the capital. The important places of worship such as Thūpārāma,¹ Mirisavāṭiya,² Mahācetiya³ were also built in the capital amidst much celebrations. Further the Bodhi tree which was planted in the Mahāmeghavana was one of the places which attracted most of the worshippers.⁴ The alms bowl of the Buddha which was brought along with the bodily relics of the Master was kept in the palace and became an object of veneration and admiration.⁵ In fact one of the seven Tamil leaders who invaded the land in the reign of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya considered the bowl - which he carried away - sufficient reward for all the hazard he took in invading a foreign land beyond seas.⁶ The more important religious ceremonies such as the Bodhi festival,⁷ the Giribhaṇḍa pūjā⁸ and the festivals around the Mahācetiya⁹ and the Thūpārāma¹⁰ were all performed in the Capital. All

1. Mv.ch.17.passim

2. Mv.ch.26.passim

3. Mv.chs.28-31.passim

4. Mv.19.29-52

5. Mv.20.13

6. Mv.33.48,55

7. Mv.19.29-56; 34.58; 35.80

8. Mv.34.75-81

9. Mv.34.41-61; 35.80

10. Mv.17.22 ff; 35.80

this religious activity brought Anuradhapura to a central position and the king who was the central figure of all this religious activity must have been looked upon as their lord by all those who avowed the faith. This must have helped very much in establishing the authority of the king of Anuradhapura over the petty leaders whose existence is attested by literary and epigraphic evidence.¹ Thus if it could be said that the abhiṣeka of Devānampiya Tissa by Aśoka helped him to gain supremacy over the other petty rulers,² the conversion of the king by Mahinda made a greater contribution in the same direction in the long run.

The introduction of Buddhism to the Island made the king the leading patron of the Sasana, and this lent a certain amount of sanctity to the royal office. This idea was not completely new because under the Brahmanical concept of kingship the king attained divine status with the abhiṣeka.³ In India both the emperor and the Buddha were regarded as upholding the moral law,⁴ and the early rulers in Ceylon may have deliberately fostered this idea. When Mahinda showed the necessity of establishing

1. See below, pp. 228 ff

2. See above, p. 50

3. See above, p. 48

4. Hocart, Kings and Councillors, p. 167

boundaries 'to make the Sasana take its root' in the Island the king caused the palace to be included within the boundaries of the Mahavihara 'so that he may abide under the command of the Buddha' ¹.

This idea must have been predominant when the king bestowed kingship on the Bodhi tree, the most venerated object of his times.² Moreover he handed over kingship to the kulas who were entrusted with the guardianship of the Bodhi tree and he himself remained as dovārika.³ Duṭṭhagāmaṇī consecrated the relics of the great Master at their enshrinement in the Mahācetiya.⁴ 'Five times, each time for seven days' states the chronicle 'did the ruler bestow the rank of the ruler of the Island upon the doctrine'.⁵ King Saddhā Tissa offered kingship to the Elder Kāla Buddharakkhita who promptly gave it back to the king, admonishing him to govern the country in righteousness.⁶ Mahādathika Mahānāga offered himself, his queen, his two sons, the state elephant and the state horse to the brotherhood, which the latter discreetly refused.⁷ The king thereupon redeemed them

1. Mv.15.180-183

2. Mv.19.30-31

3. Smp.p.99;Mv.19.32

4. Mv.31.89-92,111

5. Mv.32.36

6. Papañcasūdanī.II.p.295

7. Mv.34.86

all by paying the bhikkhūs in money and gifts.¹ By such acts as these the king created the impression that he ruled the country not by his own accord but in the name of the Sasana. Such an attitude must necessarily have lent additional weight to royal authority.

Other religious groups in the Island may have reacted to the excessive partiality of the king towards the Sangha to the neglect of their own respective faiths, but it is not clear how far such reactions, if they existed at all, affected kingship. There is conclusive evidence that Brahmanism, Jainism and other religious schools such as Ājīvakas and Paribbājakas existed in Ceylon as in contemporary India.² Two instances of Jaina protests against the royal house of Anuradhapura are recorded in our sources. In the reign of Khallatānāga three brothers conspired to murder the king and usurp the throne. However, when their plans miscarried they entered a funeral pyre at the ārāma of Giri Nigantha, the site of the later Abhayagiri Vihara.³ The last part of the story indicates that

1. Mv.34.87-88

2. Paranavitana, 'Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon'.

JRAS.CB.XXXI.No.82.pp.302-328; EHBC.pp.43-48

3. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.612

Niganṭhas had a hand in the plot, for their suicide suggests that they sympathised with the Jaina faith.¹ This same Giri Niganṭha made a vicious remark when Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya was fleeing after his defeat in the battle with the invader.² The Niganṭhas at Abhayagiri had to pay dearly for their impudence in opposing the royal house in its distress. Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya soon after regaining the lost throne, raised the Niganṭhārāma to the ground and built a Vihara there which became the famous Abhayagiri Vihara.³

It was from a Brahmana named Tissa that the opposition to Vatṭhagāmanī Abhaya's rule started in Rohana;⁴ Pali commentaries speak ill of him and he is designated as a Caṇḍāla.⁵ The bhikkhūs did not criticise non-Buddhists unless they brought harm to the Sasana;⁶ Tissa may have been against the Sasana for the monks to disparage him. But this does not in any way suggest that the Brahmanas in general opposed the Sasana or Buddhist kings.

Apart from the fact that the king had a Brahmana

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1. Cf. Chandragupta Maurya committing suicide according to Jaina Texts. R. Thapar. Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas p.17
 2. Mv.33.43-44
 3. Mv.33.79-81
 4. Mv.33.37-41
 5. Manorathapūranī I.p.92
 6. The Mahāvamsa speaks very highly of the Tamil rulers Sena, Guttika and Elāra Mv.21.10 ff

purohita,¹ votive inscriptions register Brahmanas' donations to the Sangha.²

The Paṇḍukābhaya legend refers to the king's patronage of Tāpasas, Nigaṇṭhas, Paribbājakas, Pāsāṇḍakas, Ājivakas and Brahmanas,³ but such references are absent in the period immediately following the establishment of the Sasana. There is little doubt that these faiths suffered neglect with the advent of Buddhism, and it is not unlikely that the above instances record a few sporadic oppositions to royalty as a result of the king's excessive partiality towards the Sangha to the neglect of other faiths. However, since these religious groups represented such a small fraction of the community and their number was constantly on the wane as a result of the spread of Buddhism, the effect of any such opposition on royalty was negligible.

The king's attitude towards the Sangha seems to have been guided to a certain extent by the ideas contained in the canonical texts and in the commentaries concerning the behaviour

1. See above, pp. 166-8

2. UCR.VIII.pp.259-262

3. Mv.10.96-102

of some Indian kings who acted as patrons of the Buddha and his disciples while the Master was still alive and after he attained nibbāna. Special reference should be made here to kings such as Mahākosala, Bimbisāra, Ajātasattu, Kālāśoka and Aśoka. Each of the last three, according to the chronicles of Ceylon, played a leading role in each of the three Buddhist councils.¹ For the most part the kings of Ceylon, not only of this period but also in later times, tried to emulate Aśoka,² the great patron of the Theriya sect according to the Chronicles and Pali commentaries, the nature of whose relationship with the community of Buddhist monks is much debated.³ Nevertheless the ideas that are now found in the commentaries and in the chronicles must have made their way to Ceylon with the proselytising movement itself, and there is little doubt that some of these ideas influenced royalty in as much as the princes received education in the monasteries.⁴ Hence it is

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1. Mv.chs.3,4,5. The Cullavagga (xi,xii) describes the First and the Second Councils but does not make any reference to Ajātasattu or Kālāśoka. The Samantapāsādikā (pp.10-11;33,41-61) mentions Kālāśoka as the supporter of Vajjiputtakas but his contribution to the council is not mentioned.
 2. See for instance, Cy.38.44
 3. Imperial Unity.op.cit.pp.74 ff
 4. Mv.36.116-117; Nks.p.68; Cy.38.17-21

no wonder that the kings of Ceylon tried to emulate the idealised Buddhist kings of the subcontinent.

Aśoka is said to have bestowed kingship on the Bodhi tree.¹ Devānaṃpiya Tissa did not confine himself to doing only that but handed over the government to the Bodhāhāarakulas while he himself acted as a dovārika.² But a note of caution may be helpful in this respect. The possibility cannot be ruled out that the way that some of the kings were supposed to have behaved towards the Sangha was only an idealised representation of the behaviour of some of the extremely pious kings of early Ceylon deliberately set out by the bhikkhūs so that it might further improve the close relationship that already existed between the king and the Sangha.

The most conspicuous impact of this relationship may be seen in the numerical growth of the Sangha. The small number of the community in the beginning can be gauged by the chronicle record that Devānaṃpiya Tissa caused sixty eight caves at Cetiyapabbata to be made the dwellings of the theras for the first rainy season.³ The chronicle cites instances in the reign of Devānaṃpiya Tissa when five hundred persons entered

1. Mv.18.59,60,66

2. Mv.19.30-32

3. Mv.16.12-13

the order.¹ The Vamsatthappakāsinī states that king Bhātika Abhaya's paintings of everything that is treasured in the Mahācetiya, which he is supposed to have visited, moved people so much that five hundred members from five hundred families entered the order on the first day of the display.² These numbers may not be taken as exact figures but they show the rapidity of increase of the Sangha given the royal patronage. Hundreds of votive inscriptions scattered throughout the whole Island provide sufficient evidence of the increase of the Sangha. The spread of the Sasana and the increase of monasteries can also be inferred from the Pali commentaries. The Papañcasūdanī states that there was hardly any seat in the resting houses in the villages where a bhikkhu had not sat and become an arahant (one who has attained final and absolute emancipation)³. The country was studded with Viharas and the chime of tocsins was heard from one end of the Island to the other.⁴ The Sumangalavilāsinī states that twelve thousand bhikkhūs lived in each of the Abhayagiri Vihara, the Cetiyapabbata Vihara and the Cittalapabbata Vihara.⁵

1. My. 17.59-60; 20.14-15

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p. 554, Ll. 21-30

3. Papañcasūdanī. I. p. 257; Cf. also, Sumangalavilāsinī, I. p. 188

4. Sāratthappakāsinī. II. p. 230

5. Sumangalavilāsinī II. p. 478

That these were not entirely false, though greatly exaggerated figures is attested by Fa-Hien who visited Ceylon in the 5th century A.D.¹ Thus all the evidence shows that the Sangha increased greatly in numbers and this would have been less likely had the king been less interested in the affairs of the Sangha. As the chronicles show, almost all the major Viharas were set up and maintained by the king. The spread of the Sasana and the increase of the numerical strength of the community of monks drove the king more and more into the affairs of the Sangha, whose influence in the society was now so intense that it was advantageous for the king to remain in favour with them.

Max Weber states that the celibate cleric stood outside the machinery of normal political and economic interests and was not tempted by the struggle for political power for himself or for his descendants.² This is largely true of the Sangha in Ceylon during the first three centuries after the introduction

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1. According to Fa-Hien there were 5000 monks in the Abhayagiri Vihara and 3000 in the Mahavihara. S. Beal, Buddhist Records of The Western World. I. pp. lxxiii, lxxvi
 2. Max Weber, Essays in Sociology. (Translated and Edited H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills) London. 1961. (4th impression) p.92

of Buddhism into the Island. They do not seem to have interfered in the affairs of state unless there was a direct threat to the Sasana. Learned theras sometimes regarded personal royal patronage as an evil to be avoided even at the cost of losing their prestige. When Saddhā Tissa visited the learned Elder Kuṇḍala Tissa in the hope of taking him as his adviser, the thera thought 'What good would there be by my visiting the harem?' and he behaved in such a way that the king would not ask him to visit the court.¹ Another story recorded in the Sīhalavatthuppakarana refers to a thera named Khuddhaka Tissa who outwitted the king who came to pay homage and accompany him to the capital.² The Manorathapūraṇī mentions a thera Khujja Tissa who acted likewise when king Saddhā Tissa visited him.³ A learned thera refused to visit the court and leave his cave dwellings as the king requested him to do, but he was ultimately constrained to obey when the king sealed off the breasts of suckling mothers around the area where the thera lived and prevented the children from being fed unless the thera visited the court.⁴

1. Svp. pp. 138-139

2. Svp. pp. 168-169

3. Manorathapūraṇī. II. pp. 246-248

4. Visuddhimagga. pp. 38-39

If the Mahāvamsa account of the conquest of the northern kingdom by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is taken at its face value it provides an instance of monks taking part in political affairs. It is stated that when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was ready to cross the river to fight with the alien king who occupied the Sinhalese throne he pleaded with the Sangha for some bhikkhūs to accompany the army to the battlefield 'as the sight of the bhikkhūs was a blessing and protection' to them.¹ The Vamsatthappakāsinī explaining this states that the Sangha acquiesced in this request as a penance for their not preventing the war between the two brothers.² There is, however, reason to discount the Mahāvamsa statement of the political involvement of the Sangha. The earlier chronicle, the Dīpavamsa, knew nothing of this role played by the Sangha in the war. The author of the Mahāvamsa may have described an earlier incident according to contemporary ideas. The time in which the author of the Mahāvamsa lived was one of political stress and strife; the country was torn asunder by the south Indian hordes who ravaged the Island. This situation would have compelled the Sangha to take an active part in political affairs, and even Dhātusena, who put an end to the Tamil rule, was brought up for this purpose by the Sangha during the period in which the Mahāvamsa was written. Therefore it is likely that

1. Mv. 25.1-4

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p. 473. Ll. 9-14

3. Cv. 38. 11-39

the Mahāvamsa was influenced by the contemporary situation in attributing to the Sangha of the earlier period an involvement in political affairs to the point of marching to the battlefield.

At the death of Saddhā Tissa the amaccas appointed Thūlathana, the younger son of the king, to the throne with the consent of the Sangha.¹ This is interpreted as an attempt made by the Sangha to place their own favourite on the throne in violation of the law of succession.² But it should be pointed out that the Sangha did not directly interfere in this matter. They were compelled to give consent to an act committed by those who wielded the real power. It was the amaccas who decided, while the Sangha was only pressed to consent.³ It may be that either the amaccas or the prince thought it a master-stroke to get the sanction of the bhikkhūs so that this irregular act might have popular backing. The monks on their part would have thought it prudent to recognise the de facto ruler rather than to support the claims of the rightful pretender, thus making an enemy of the real ruler. Such an idea is further strengthened by the fact that it was the bhikkhūs at the Thūpārāma who supported this measure and not those at the Mahavihara,⁴ as one would have

1. Mv.33.17-18

2. The Pāli Literature of Ceylon.p.40

3. 'amaccā taṃ anurakkhamto saṃghaṃ āpuccitvā tassa rajjaṃ adamsu.' Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.610 Ll.19-20

4. Mv.33.17-18

expected in such a situation. The Mahavihara was probably strong enough to repudiate the wishes of the amaccas whereas the Thūpārāma was not.

A study of the king versus the Sangha supports two observations: first, that the hostility was not between the king and the Sangha but between the king and the Sangha of the orthodox church i.e. the Mahavihara fraternity; and second, that such inimical relationships were confined to the reigns of a few kings, while by and large there was peace and amity between these two institutions at other times. However, the importance of such isolated conflicts lies in the fact that they represent the extremity of a development that had been taking place between the king and the Sangha since the dawn of the Christian era, and second, that in the end this led to a complete reversal of the attitude of the king towards the Sangha, particularly in relation to the orthodoxy.

The earliest of such conflicts was seen in the reign of Lajji Tissa who resented the fact that the Sangha sided with his brother when the latter contrived to usurp the throne.¹ Nevertheless the king was soon reconciled with the Sangha.² More serious was the conflict between king Kanirajānu Tissa and the Sangha at Cetiya-pabbata. Kanirajānu Tissa adjudicated

1. See above, p. 211

2. Mv. 33.20-21

a law-suit in the uposathāgāra (chapter house) of the Cetiyapabbata Vihara. Sixty bhikkhūs dissatisfied with the decision plotted to assassinate the king even within the uposathāgāra itself. The conspiracy miscarried and the king in his rage caused the conspirators to be flung down the Kaṇirapabbata.¹ Apart from the details of this particular case neither the king nor any other layman had any right to intervene in a dispute arising within the uposathāgāra.² The uposathāgāra is the place where the Sangha met for sanghakamma or uposathakamma in which breach of vinaya rules by the members of the community of monks was declared and necessary action was taken by the Elders.³ This institution was designed to keep the Sangha united. Hence when the king interfered in an affair of the uposathāgāra and gave his decision he was carrying the royal patronage a little too far and caused the Sangha to disobey vinaya rules. The other important observation to be made is that since the disaffected party planned to assassinate

1. Mv.35.9-11

2. When it was brought to the notice of the Buddha that Devadatta performed uposathakamma in an assembly where laymen were present the Buddha set out the vinaya rule that Pātimokkha should not be read in an assembly where there were laymen. Mahāvagga II.16.8 (p.115)

3. Mahāvagga II.1-3 (pp.102-104)

the king within the uposathāgāra itself, most probably after the decision was taken by the king, one may wonder whether the king was in the habit of regularly visiting the uposatha house whenever there was a serious dispute regarding a breach of Vinaya. If such was the case there is little surprise that a section of the bhikkhūs who opposed such interference on the part of the king resisted not so much because the judgement was unsatisfactory in this particular case~~but~~because they feared that the king's visits might create a precedent. Thus the king and the Sangha came into conflict while the former was trying to preserve the purity and the unity of the Sangha and the Sangha was trying to preserve its authority over matters ecclesiastical, tolerating no outside intervention in this plane.

Greater conflicts took place by the end of the period under consideration. In the early period the Sangha did not become involved in politics unless the Sasana was directly threatened. But after the first and second centuries A.D. the Sangha came to take more interest in politics as things that happened at the court were likely to have a direct bearing on the Sangha, for the Sangha had developed into a landed aristocracy.¹ As the land was not cultivated by the members of the community of monks the monasteries must have had their

1. See above, p. 179

own tenants. According to Fa-Hien when land was granted to the community of monks, the population, fields and houses within the area were given to the Sangha with absolute ownership.¹ The Cūlavamsa mentions the donation of villages to the Sangha just outside our period.² The preservation of these and the peaceful enjoyment of monastic properties would have been sufficient reason for the monks to take an interest in politics. A stable government law, and order were always prerequisites not only for spiritual advancement but also for the preservation of monastic properties. The Sahassavatthupparakāṇḍa mentions a Śirināga who ravaged Viharas in order to obtain wealth to secure the throne.³ At a later date Dāṭṭhapatissa (I) behaved in a similar manner.⁴ It is no wonder then that the Sangha took to politics, from which they had remained aloof at an earlier date.

The existence of a division within the order of the monks was another reason for them to take more interest in politics. By interfering with the succession, different fractions of the Sangha tried to secure the loyalty of the

1. S.Beal. Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims. p.161

2. Cv.37.173

3. Ssvp.pp.21-22

4. Cv.44.131-132

king to their own fraternity. The Mahāvihāra was the first to adopt this policy, by supporting Vasabha when Sabha was on the throne.¹ Although Sabha was a usurper he belonged to a noble family² and Vasabha had no better claim.³ Moreover inscriptions of Sabha as well as the chronicle record his donations to the Sangha.⁴ Hence by supporting an adventurer like Vasabha the Sangha ignored the neutral policy adopted on such occasions at an earlier date.

Again Sirisaṅghabodhi seems to have come to the throne with the surreptitious support of the Sangha; his name, a combination of sangha and bodhi⁵ does not appear to be a name usually given at birth; in the later Anuradhapura period kings used Sanghabodhi as a title.⁶ This arouses suspicion as to the real name and origin of this ruler. The chronicle spares no pains in describing this king as a Bodhisatva (mahāsatta = a future Buddha).⁷ But the Tiṃbirivāva inscription leaves

1. Mv.35.65-66

2. EZ.V.pp.412-418 (15)

3. Mv.35.59-70

4. EZ.III.pp.162-165; Mv.35.57-58

5. Mv. 36.73

6. UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.364-365

7. Mv.36.73 ff, esp.verse 90 where he is called a mahāsatta = Bhōdisattva, a future Buddha.

little room for doubt that, Goṭhābhaya being the rightful heir, Sirisanghabodhi and his predecessor were usurpers.¹ Again the mahāsatta had a hand in the assassination of king Vijaya Kumāra.² All these instances together with the fact that he was connected with Mahiyaṅgana,³ a renowned centre of Buddhism from the earliest historical times,⁴ suggest that Sirisanghabodhi came to the throne with secret support of the Sangha.

Therefore when Goṭhābhaya ousted Sirisaṅghabodhi to secure his patrimony he could not have been much in favour with the Mahāvihara fraternity.⁵ In order to obtain the favour of the dominant section of the Sangha, Goṭhābhaya dealt the Abhayagiri Vihara, the rival of the Mahavihara, a telling and unjustified blow, by disrobing, branding and banishing the Vaitulya monks.⁶ In earlier instances the king interfered in religious matters only when there was an open conflict between the two Viharas. The assumption of Goṭhābhaya's ulterior motives is further supported by the cruel punishments he inflicted on the members of the Abhayagiri Vihara.

1. EZ.IV.pp.223-228

2. Mv.36.58-63

3. Mv.36.58

4. Mahiyaṅgana was one of the earliest Buddhist shrines. The author of the Mahāvamsa could not trace its origin and therefore associates it with one of the supposed visits of the Buddha to the Island. Mv.1.21-42

5. Mv.36.91-98

6. Mv.36.111-112; Nks.p.67

A bhikkhu became involved in politics at the end of the reign of Goṭhābhaya. Sanghamitta, the Colian monk who championed the cause of the Abhayagiri Vihara, participated in a futile attempt to keep Jeṭṭha Tissa from the throne in favour of Mahāsena, the younger son of the king.¹ The thera had to flee for his safety when the move failed.² The relentless thera once more appeared on the scene as he came to carry out the consecration ceremony of Mahāsena when the latter ascended the throne at the death of his brother.³

Any assessment of the conflicts between the king and the Sangha, especially the major clash during the reign of Mahāsena, requires a thorough understanding of the powerful position that the Mahavihara held over the community of monks in the Island at this time. The bhikkhūs of the other Viharas looked towards the Mahavihara for guidance when fine points of vinaya were raised.⁴ A story related in the Papañcasūdanī makes it clear that when bhikkhūs in other Viharas were found to be inadequately proficient in the doctrine they were sent by their Elders to the Mahavihara to improve their knowledge of dhamma.⁵

1. Mv.36.118-123, Cf.also, UHC.I.Pt.1.p.192

2. Mv.36.123

3. Mv.37.2-3

4. Smp.pp.305-307

5. Papañcasūdanī.IV.pp.29-30

The Sumangalavilāsini informs us that all the bhikkhus living on the north side of the Mahavāli river attended the Mahavihara to check whether they had learnt the aṭṭhakāthas correctly; this was done every year after the vassa season and any defect was set right on these occasions.¹ Moreover the Mahāvihāra owned the holiest and most hallowed places of the Island, which the thera Mahinda himself had predicted would have future greatness. Thus by being the sole authority on ecclesiastical matters the Mahavihara enjoyed the undivided honour and respect of both the people and royalty which it jealously guarded, tolerating no rival in the field.

Because of this honoured place enjoyed by the Mahavihara and the spiritual authority it held over the rest of the community of monks, the king was forced to take sides with the Mahavihara if it had any difference with other Viharas in the Island, for the alienation of the Mahavihara meant the loss of popularity among the majority of his subjects. Thus the religious policy of the king turned out to be one of supporting the Mahavihara against anything which opposed it. Consequently the Abhayagiri Vihara which severed connexions with the orthodoxy in the reign of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya² was not recognised as having any right to maintain

1. Sumangalavilāsini.p.581

2. Mv.33.95-98

its heterodox ideas even though the Vihara maintained its independent existence from the Mahavihara.¹

The scant regard paid to the doctrinal scruples of the Abhayagiri Vihara is demonstrated by the fact that when disputes arose between the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiri Vihara the king convened only the bhikkhūs of the pañca mahā āvāsa (Five Great Residences), which all belonged to the Mahavihara fraternity.² The king suppressed the Abhayagiri Vihara during the reign of Vohārika Tissa³ and Goṭhābhaya.⁴ Thus by the second and third centuries A.D. the king's responsibility of preserving the purity and the unity of the Sasana virtually amounted to the suppression of any Vihara which was not in agreement with the Mahavihara. The Mahavihara's claim to supreme authority over the whole community of monks in the Island was backed by the coercive power of the state and as such it could influence the people to a great extent. Thus the Mahavihara became an imperium in imperio.

1. Mv.33.96; Nks.pp.65-66

2. Opinion is divided among scholars as to the identity of the pañca mahā āvāsa but they agree unanimously that all the five residences were Viharas associated with the Mahavihara fraternity. EZ.IV.p.278-279, see also p.278 note 4.

3. Mv.36.41; Nks.pp.66-67

4. Mv.36.111-112; Nks.p.67

This attitude of the king in taking sides with a section of the bhikkhūs in the Island to the exclusion of some others must necessarily have tarnished the king's reputation as the overall patron of the Sangha in the Island which he enjoyed in the beginning. This is very important because the Abhayagiri Vihara must have had some amount of popular sympathy since it propagated a popular form of Buddhism.¹ However, as if to redress the balance, the Mahavihara's dependence on the king in carrying out its ecclesiastical ordinances gave the king powers over the community of monks which according to the Vinaya should have remained with that community.² All this set in motion two inconsistent developments which precipitated the major clash between the king and the orthodox church, i.e. the Mahavihara, in the reign of Mahāsena.³ For the new relationship between the king and the Sangha on the one hand strengthened the power of the king over the Sangha and on the other hand helped tighten the hold of the Mahavihara over the community of monks.

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1. The Vaitulyavāda which the Abhayagiri Vihara propagated is a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism. See, S.Paranavitana 'Mahāyānism in Ceylon! CJSG.II.pp.35 ff; Popular religious ceremonies centred around the Abhayagiri Vihara. Cv.37.96-97; S.Beal, Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims. pp.155-158
 2. Cullavagga.I.1-34 (pp.1-30)
 3. Mv.37.4 ff

Disputes regarding the respective spheres of authority of these two institutions arose as early as the time of Kaniṭṭha Tissa. The king in building some religious edifices and making a road to the Dakkhinagiri Vihara ignored the boundaries of the Mahavihara.¹ Although the Mahāvamsa is silent about the reactions of the Mahavihara to the act of the king the Vamsatthappakāsini states that the king did all this by maintaining his own authority (attano issariyaṃ pavattetvā) which indicates that the king had to cope with the resistance of the Mahavihara.² A more fierce struggle took place when Mahasena attempted to stamp out the misdemeanor of the inmates of the Mahavihara.³ In spite of what is said in the Mahāvamsa, which describes Mahāsena's attitude towards the Mahavihara as due to the evil influence of an evil friend,⁴ the fragmentary inscription found at the Jetavanavihara establishes that the king was acting in good faith to preserve the purity of the Sangha when he enacted sanctions against the Mahavihara.⁵

The attitude of the Mahavihara to the political authority

1. Mv.36.10-13

2. Vamsatthappakāsini.p.659, Ll.23-26

3. Mv.37.4.ff

4. Mv.37.4.ff

5. See above, pp. 189-90

is vividly demonstrated by the way they treated the king when Mahāsena asked the Mahavihara to ignore their boundaries so that he could build the Jetavana Vihara within them.¹ The bhikkhūs of the Mahavihara refused outright saying 'Our Vihara (i.e. the Mahavihara) is not an ordinary Vihara' (na yaṃ vā taṃ vā vihāraṃ).² This event took place after the rehabilitation of the Mahavihara. If the Mahavihara dared to turn down a request of the king with so little ceremony even after the gruesome experiences they had undergone for disobeying a royal mandate only a little while before, it can only be imagined how much more conceited the Mahavihara must have been before that event.

The Mahavihara's tendency to challenge royal authority when it went against their interests led to a change in the king's attitude towards the Sangha. Instead of preserving the unity of the Sangha which only limited his power the king attempted to bring forth as many powerful Viharas as possible. This is evident in the incident of the establishment of the Jetavana Vihara.³ Mahāsena made friends with Kohon Tissa and built him the Jetavana Vihara even in the face of the opposition of the Mahavihara because it is said, the king was particularly

1. Mv.37.32 ff

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī.pp.681-682

3. Mv.37.32-39

susceptible to heresy.¹ But such an explanation does not fully account for the behaviour of the king when one considers the amount of opposition that the king had to face when he championed a cause which ran counter to the interests of the Mahavihara.² The king's intention may have been to set up another rival Vihara which claimed a share of the people's faith, so that the power held by the Mahavihara in the ecclesiastical field would be diminished.

The occupation of the Cetiyapabbata Vihara by the bhikkhūs of the Abhayagiri Vihara when the Mahavihara was destroyed lends support to this conclusion.³ The Cetiyapabbata was one of the holiest places in the Island from very early times, connected as it was with the arrival of the Thera Mahinda and the conversion of the Island;⁴ the grandiose ceremony which centred around this place from the time of Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga has already been noted.⁵ It is hardly conceivable that the bhikkhūs of the Abhayagiri Vihara would have dared to occupy the Cetiyapabbata Vihara unless they were backed by the king.

1. The Pali Literature of Ceylon. p.62

2. The king had to face an open rebellion from one of his own
amaccas. Mv.37.17 ff

3. Cv.38.75; Nks.p.69

4. Mv.chs.13,14 passim

5. See above, pp. 181-2

The occupation of the Cetiyapabbata Vihara by Dhammarucikas¹ augmented in various ways the power of the dissident monks; Cetiyapabbata was not only one of the most hallowed places in the Island but was also richly endowed by the kings.² Hence the act would have added greatly to the economic prosperity of the Abhayagiri Vihara and this is confirmed by Fa-Hien who described the treasures of the Abhayagiri Vihara with greater eloquence than he devoted to those of the Mahavihara.³ Such a state of affairs would have weakened the ecclesiastical authority of the Mahavihara.

Thus the orthodox church in trying to maintain its position as the sole authority on ecclesiastical matters for the whole community of monks refused to submit to the political authority of the king. The king in his initial attempts to impose his authority over the orthodox church realised that he was unable to accomplish the task he undertook. Hence he changed his policy towards the Sangha and instead of acting as its unifier tried to maintain as many rival Viharas as possible so that the

1. Dhammarucikas is the name given to the inmates of the

Abhayagiri Vihara who severed from the Mahavihara. Nks. pp.65-66

2. AIC. pp.17-18

3. S.Beal, Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims. pp.151-158

spiritual power would not be a match for his power. By this policy the king could count upon the support of a considerable section of the Sangha with their lay followers in case the established church refused to submit to his political mandate. Henceforth all the major Viharas, the Mahavihara, the Abhayagiri Vihara and the Jetavana Vihara received equal treatment at the hand of the king.¹

Thus after Buddhism was officially recognised the king took every measure to spread the faith and in his enthusiasm he tried to preach the Dhamma himself. Popular festivals were converted into religious ceremonies and the king took a leading part in them. The king's interest in religious activities was not always due to his desire to obtain merit, for there were deeper political motives which governed his actions.

The Sangha provided informal advisers for the king and extended a helping hand to royalty in distress. There is sufficient reason to believe that the idea of a unified kingdom under a single king came from the Sangha and was cherished and realised with their aid. All this religious activity brought the Anuradhapura kingdom into prominence. The halo of sanctity which surrounded the royal figure gave additional weight to his authority, but there seems to have been a slight protest from other creeds because in his extreme partiality towards the Sangha the king neglected these faiths.

1. Cv. 37.61,65-66,96-97,123; 38.75-76;39.12,13,15,30-33,41

Conflicts arose between the king and the Sangha when the king carried his patronage too far and interfered in the affairs of the uposathāgāra. The Sangha also started taking more interest in politics as they became a landed aristocracy, and the existence of a division within the order aggravated the situation so that the monks tried to put their favourites on the throne in order to secure material benefits. As the orthodox church grew in power the king was forced to take sides with them, but disputes arose regarding the respective fields of power of these two institutions which led to the ultimate clash in the reign of Mahāsena. When the king realised that his power was no match for that of the orthodox church he made a sudden reversal of policy and instead of attempting to maintain the unity of the Sasana tried to bring about and maintain as many rival Viharas as possible, thereby to redress the balance.

CHAPTER VI

The Widening Horizon of Royal Authority

It is only with the accession of Devānampiya Tissa that anything precise about the political geography of the Anuradhapura kingdom can be said. For this we have to depend primarily on epigraphical data, although literary records furnish supplementary evidence. On the one hand there are inscriptions of various local rulers scattered throughout the Island and on the other hand there are inscriptions either issued by the king or referring to the king. A careful examination of the location of these records is the only way to understand the geographical extent of the political power of the king.

From the provenance of the inscriptions of local rulers the limitations of the extent of power of the Anuradhapura king can be clearly gauged until about the first century B.C. Inscriptions referring to local rulers are found at Kaludupotāna Malai,¹ Kusalānakañḍa,² and Bovattegala³ in the Batticaloa District of the Eastern Province; at Kollādeniya in Vellassa⁴ and Olagamgala

1. ASCAR.1933.J.19 (84); Text, UCR.VII.p.240; JCBRAS.NS.V,p.146.7(i)

2. AC.p.445 (66); revised, UCR.VII.p.240; JCBRAS.NS.V.p.145

3. CJSG.II.p.114-115 (462), (465), (466)

4. ASCAR.1934.J.18 (71,i)

in the Mahiyaṅgana area in the Badulla District;¹ in
 Tānkāṭiya near Balangoda District of the Province of Sabaragamuwa;²
 at Koṭṭādāmūhela in the Hambantota District of the Southern
 Province;³ at Āmbulaṃbe in the Matale District,⁴ and Baṃbaragala
 in the Kandy District,⁵ of the Central Province, and Yaṭahalena
 in the Kegalle District in the North Western Province.⁶

The evidence for the existence of local rulers is supplemented
 by literary sources which refer to petty local ruling houses in
 various parts of the Island. The Mahāvamsa mentions the
 Kṣatriyas of Kājaragāma and Candanagāma who attended the festival
 of the Bodhi tree;⁷ more information about the royal family of
 Kataragama is found in the Dhātuvamsa.⁸ In addition to these
 the Dhātuvamsa refers to minor royal dynasties at Seru (modern
 Seruvila in Dīghavāpi) and Soma which must be located quite
 close to it.⁹ According to the Mahāvamsa there was a royal

1. ASCAR. 1952.G 41. Nos. 9,10

2. ASCAR. 1952.G 41. No. 18

3. ASCAR. 1934.J 21 (78); Text, UCR.VII.p.239

4. AIC.p.35 No.34; revised, UCR.VII.p.240

5. ASCAR. 1935.J 10 (42)

6. CJSG.II.p.203 (618)

7. Mv.19.54-55

8. Dhātuvamsa. p. 18

9. Dhātuvamsa. pp.25-26

house at Kalyāni on the western sea coast of the Island¹ and the Dhātuvam̐sa refers to a kingdom called Girinuvāra in the southern part of the Central highlands.² Thus the mere existence of petty royal families in the Eastern, Central, Southern and Western Provinces excludes the possibility of the king's power being extended to these areas of the Island in and around the third century B.C.

Even within the northern parts of the Island where the mandate of the Anuradhapura king was supreme, there was a limitation to the exercise of royal power because of the existence of local rulers who styled themselves rajas in their inscriptions. Such local rajas within the Anuradhapura kingdom itself are found at Mihintale, a few miles from the city itself;³ Periyapuliyanakulaṃ in the District of Vavuniyāva;⁴ Kaṇḍegamakanda,⁵ Mutugala⁶ and Diṃbulāgala⁷ in the Tamankaḍuva area. Inscriptions belonging to local rulers even within the Anuradhapura kingdom show that the authority of the king was limited.

1. Mv.22.12-22

2. Dhātuvam̐sa, p.25

3. ASCAR.1911-12.(supplement) p.95, No.11 (ii); revised, EZ.V.p.213(14)

4. EZ.V.p.244 (22)

5. CALR.III.p.209 (4)

6. CALR.III.p.211 (4)

7. CALR.III p.4 (2)

Further evidence may be found in the distribution of inscriptions of the Anuradhapura king upto the 1st century B.C. The distribution of inscriptions referring to Devānampiya Tissa limits the political geography of the Anuradhapura king to the present North Central¹ and North Western² Provinces, but the epigraphical records of Uttiya are found only in the North Central Province.³ The absence of inscriptions mentioning Uttiya in the North Western Province does not prove that he had no authority there, for the Mahāvamsa states that Sūra Tissa, one of Uttiya's successors, built a Vihara in this province.⁴ In the light of the above facts we may conclude first, that the authority of the royal house of Anuradhapura was felt, by and large, mostly in the area to the north of the Mahā Oya, and, second, that local authority flourished most in the area to the south of the Central highlands. Although there are references to local rulers in the Kegalle and Matale areas, references there are fewer than in the south. Thus, taken collectively, the above epigraphical data indicate that

1. EZ.V.p.210 (2), p.217 (31), p.231 f;

2. AIC.p.48 No.84. revised, UCR.VIII.p.260

3. EZ.V.pp.217-18 (34), p.220 (46,47), p.231

4. My.21.4; The Nagaraṅga Vihara is located in the Kurunegala District, North Western Province. Nicholas, Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon. p.95

the political horizon of the Anuradhapura king down to Duṭṭhagāmaṇi (B.C. 161-137) did not extend beyond the North Central and North Western Provinces. Although epigraphic data are not forthcoming from the Northern Province, the fact that the king built Viharas in this area is proof of its being within the king's territory.¹

Some of the local rulers mentioned in the inscriptions as well as in the literary sources were related to the Anuradhapura rulers by blood. The Yaṭṭahalena Vihara inscriptions mention a local ruler related to the Anuradhapura king.² Similarly the raja Siva of the Olagaṃgala inscription³ and Sura Tissa of the Dimbulāgala inscription⁴ have been identified as referring to Mahā Sīva and Sūra Tissa, the successors of Uttiya on the throne of Anuradhapura, as local rulers. The chronicles inform us that a brother of Devānāmpiya Tissa was governing the area of Mahiyaṅgana when the Elder Mahinda visited the Island.⁵ Mahānāga, the prince who escaped from Anuradhapura to Rohana for fear of the scheming queen, could also be included in this category.⁶ According to the Vamsatthappakāsinī, the royal

1. Mv.20.25; Nicholas, Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon. p.83
2. CJSG.II.p.203 (618)
3. ASCAR.1952.G 41 No.9,10, See also G.33 (141)
4. CALR.III.p.4 (2)
5. Mv.1.40; Vamsatthappakāsinī. p.99, Ll.20-23
6. Mv.22.2-8

house of Kalyāni was directly connected with the Anuradhapura dynasty.¹ Hence these local rulers who were related to the Anuradhapura king by blood may not have challenged the supremacy of the king although they may not actually have acknowledged his supremacy.

Although all these references to local rulers are contemporaneous with or slightly later than the time of Devānampiya Tissa, certain events that took place in the reign of this monarch suggest that the assertion of the authority of the king of Anuradhapura had already begun by Devānampiya Tissa's time. The coronation of Devānampiya Tissa carried out on a grand scale after the Indian fashion² could be taken as the starting point of this new development, to which may be added the attendance of Kṣatriyas from Kājaragāma and Candanagāma at the festival held in honour of the Bodhi tree and the planting of two saplings of the Bodhi in those two places.³ The significance of these events have been already examined.⁴ Perhaps the flight of Mahānāga to Rohana may also mark another stage of the political expansion of the Anuradhapura kingdom.⁵

1. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.431, Ll.1-8

2. See above, pp. 33 ff

3. Mv.19.54-55,62

4. See above, p. 186

5. Mv.22.2-6

However it is only with the unification of the Island by Duṭṭhagāmaṇi that the real assertion of the political authority of the Anuradhapura king began. The ultimate result of the expansion of Rohana which culminated in the conquest of Anuradhapura by Duṭṭhagāmaṇi and the expansion of the authority of Anuradhapura started by Devānaṃpiya Tissa were identical; nevertheless a difference may be seen in the way in which the two movements took place. In the time of Devānaṃpiya Tissa it was an attempt to spread the authority of the Anuradhapura king over the rest of the Island, whereas later the events moved in the opposite direction, and it was the Mahāgāma that started asserting itself.

It took several generations for the Mahāgāma to assert its authority over the whole Island. The annihilation of the Kṣatriyas of Kataragama by Goṭhābhaya marks the beginning of this movement bringing Mahāgāma and the adjoining provinces under the hegemony of the dynasty of Mahānāga.¹ Unifying Rohana under a single rule, Kākavanna Tissa completed the task begun by his predecessors; a marriage alliance was engineered between the royal house of Kalyāni and that of Mahāgāma and the dynasty of Kalyāni was never heard of thereafter.²

1. Dhātuvamsa.pp.18-19

2. Mv.22.11-22

Inscriptions found at Koṭāḍāmūhela confirm that after the initial conflict between the two royal houses in the time of Goṭṭhābhaya peace was established between them with a marriage alliance.¹ A conflict that arose between the king of Girinuvara and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, still in his tender years, spelt the end of the kingdom of Girinuvara.² With astute statesmanship and the aid of the Sangha, Kākavaṇṇa Tissa imposed his authority over the two royal houses of Seru and Soma.³ The establishment of a military camp in Dīghavāpi under the leadership of prince Tissa may have been an attempt to consolidate the authority of Mahāgāma over local rulers of this area rather than an effort to stem the tide of an invasion from the north for which a military camp at Dīghavāpi would be of little strategic value.⁴ The conquest of Anuradhapura by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was the culmination of this development thus spreading the political authority of Mahāgāma over the whole Island.⁵

Thus the spread of political supremacy was one in which the ruler of Mahāgāma asserted his authority in contrast to the assertion of the authority of Anuradhapura which was

1. Paranavitana, The God of Adam's Peak.p.66

2. Dhātuvamsa, pp.25-26

3. Dhātuvamsa, pp.27 ff.Cf.also, UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.149 ff.

4. Nicholas, Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon. p.26

5. Mv.ch.25 passim.

apparent earlier. Nevertheless, once the ruler of Rohana had realised his object he shifted the seat of power to Anuradhapura which emerged as the capital of the Island once again.¹ Hence the suzerainty of the Anuradhapura ruler over the whole Island was established for the first time. The disappearance of the inscriptions of local rulers after the first century B.C. may be taken as indicating the spread of Anuradhapura authority over the whole Island.²

From the accession of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī to the throne of Anuradhapura we are mainly dependent upon the inscriptions of, or referring to, the Anuradhapura king in gauging the geographical extent of the political authority of the king. Inscriptions which refer to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī are found in the North Central,³ North Western,⁴ and Southern Provinces.⁵ Two of the inscriptions found in the Southern Province which are dated in the king's

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1. When Duṭṭhagāmaṇī conquered the throne from Tamils he remained at Anuradhapura and did not return to Rohana.
 2. The reign of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī falls between B.C. 161-137; this implies that petty local rulers may have been allowed to remain for another half^a century.
 3. EZ.V.pp.213 (13). The identity of this inscription is uncertain; see above, pp.78-80; p.216 (29). The identity of the ruler in this inscription is also uncertain; see p.232; AC.p.441-442(56-57)
 4. AIC.p.73 No.1
 5. ASCAR.1934.J 18 (71,ii); Text, UCR.VIII.p.116; ASCAR.1935.J 10(41); UCR.VII.p.238, note 4; JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.136-137 (1)

reign should be taken as positive evidence that the king's power was accepted in south Ceylon. The epigraphical records mentioning the immediate successor of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Saddhā Tissa, not only confirm this but also justify the additional surmise that the authority of the king was preserved intact in Rohana.¹ In the reign of Lajji Tissa, the son and successor of Saddhā Tissa, the area in which epigraphs are found shrinks, probably showing the loss of supremacy over remote provinces owing to the disputed succession.² All the inscriptions naming Lajji Tissa as the supreme king occur in the North Central Province.³ The extension of the rule of the king in the reign of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya may be seen in the wide diffusion of records mentioning him in the North Central,⁴ North Western,⁵ and Southern⁶

1. AIC.p.73 N.3; EZ.I.p.144 (1); EZ.V.p.211 (4), p.232;

ASCAR.1935.J.9 (39); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.140 (i)

2. Mv.33.17-19

3. AC.p.444 (63); EZ.I.p.144 (1), p.148; CALR.III p.205.No.2

4. ASCAR. 1893.pp.12-13 (46); ASCAR.1897.p.12 (8); AC.p.444 (64);

JCBRAS.NS.V.p.151 (10)

5. AC.p.442 (58); revised, CJSG.II.p.126 (529)

6. ASCAR. 1934.J 18 (71, ii);

JCBRAS.NS.II.p.131 (42)

Provinces. Inscriptions referring to Mahācūlika Mahātissa which are found in the North Central,¹ Eastern,² Central,³ and Southern⁴ Provinces afford corroborative evidence to support the supposition that the authority of the king, which had been eclipsed owing to domestic troubles as well as foreign aggression,⁵ made fresh headway under Vaṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya. Since Mahācūlika Mahātissa is not credited with any political conquest in the Mahāvamsa he must have merely inherited what his father bequeathed him.

Subsequent to the political confusion which followed the accession of queen Anulā there emerges a period of relative stability in the reign of Kuṭṭakaṇṇa Tissa; the epigraphical data show that his supremacy was acknowledged in the North Central,⁶

1. AIC.No.20, revised; EZ.I.pp.61-62, the identity of kings given here is inaccurate; EZ.III.p.154
2. ASCAR.1934.J 18 (71, iv); UCR.VII.p.243, notes. 50,51
3. JRAS.CB.XXXVI.No.98.pp.65-66
4. ASCAR. 1934.J 18 (71,ii); JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.131 (42),132 (54)
5. Mv.33.33-78
6. ASC.SPR. 1896.p.58 (ii,No.56); EZ.I.pp.61-62, The identity of the kings given here is inaccurate; EZ.III.pp.154,156.note 5; CALR.III.pp.76-77 No. 3. The identification of the king here is inaccurate.

North Western,¹ Eastern² and Southern³ Provinces, and his two sons Bhātika Abhaya⁴ and Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga⁵ maintained this constantly. Of their successors upto the end of devānampiya kula few inscriptions occur and these belong to Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya.⁶ This dearth of epigraphical records in the period following Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga must not be taken as conclusive evidence that the Anuradhapura king lost his sovereignty over the rest of the Island, although this would be quite possible. At least one king, Ilanāga, had some power in Rohana and this may be due to his spending some time in Rohana when the Lambakaṇṇas usurped the throne.⁷

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1. CJSG.II.p.179 (700), p.218 (700); EZ.V.pp.252-259
 2. ASCAR. 1934.J.18 (71.iv); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.142
 3. CJSG.II.p.25 (398), pp.17-18
 4. EZ.III.p.154; CJSG.II.pp.25 (398), see also.pp.17-18
UCR.VII.p.238.note.7
 5. ASCAR.1911-12 (supplement) p.116 (31); ASCAR.1934.J 18 (71,iv),
Text; UCR.VII.p.243,note.51; CALR.III.pp.205-206 (1); EZ.I.
pp.61-62. The identification of kings here is inaccurate;
EZ.III.pp.155-156; CJSG.II.pp.179 (700),218 (700)
 6. CJSG.II.pp.179 (700),218 (700); CJSG.II.pp.101 (525), 126 (525)
 7. Mv.35.16.44. Ilanāga assigned the Hatthibhoga janapada which
is in Rohana to his elephant, i.e. for its maintenance.

Taken collectively the above data give a clear idea of how far the political authority of the Anuradhapura king stretched. Before Duṭṭhagāmaṇī it extended to the North Central and North Western Provinces, and some parts of, or even the whole of, the Northern Province may have been under the rule of the Anuradhapura kings, who sometimes annexed the extreme north of the Eastern Province, but nothing beyond. However the accession of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī transforms the scene completely; in addition to the North Central and North Western Provinces the whole of the Eastern Province right down to Pānam Pattu was permanently under the rule of the king, except on those rare occasions when some misfortune befell the king or there was a quarrel over succession. Further, at times, the Southern Province and portions of Ūva, Sabaragamuva and Central Provinces were included in the king's territories.

Thus the power of the royal house of Anuradhapura expanded suddenly during Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya's reign. This brought to the forefront the question of the device by which the south was to be kept subject to the king's authority. The solution was to appoint a close relative, sometimes the heir-apparent himself, Governor of Rohana and for him to attempt to preserve whatever authority he could over the southern regions. It was Saddhā Tissa who was the governor of Rohana, keeping Dīghavāpi as his centre, during the reign of his brother, Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.¹

1. Mv.32.1-2; Mv.33.14

Lajji Tissa stepped into this office when his father Saddhā Tissa ascended the throne.¹ Bhātikābhaya's younger brother Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga was the uparāja of Rohana; the uvaraja Naka of the Kirinda Tissamahārāma inscriptions is identified with Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga.² A son of Bhātika Abhaya lived in Rohana and styled himself Rohinika Gamani, as is evident from the Saṅdagiri Vehera inscription; the prince must have been commissioned governor of Rohana under Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga who departed for Anuradhapura in order to ascend the throne.³ Thus the king could claim paramount rule over the whole Island, even though he exercised little direct control beyond the central highlands.

All this information bears out the idea that the southern regions remained within the framework of the Anuradhapura kingdom after Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya, but the king's authority in these regions was very loose. The first part of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇi's reign saw a successful rebellion in Rohana caused by a Brahmana.⁴ After Lajji Tissa vacated Dīghavāpi to seize the throne of Anuradhapura, very little is heard about the southern principality,

1. Mv.33.18-19, Obviously Lajji Tissa stayed behind as the provincial ruler when his father left.

2. JRAS.CB.XXXVI.No.98.pp.60-65

3. CJSG.II.p.25 (398),pp.17-18

4. Mv.33.37-41

and the political troubles which ensued at the death of Saddhā Tissa¹ might have afforded the governor of Rohana complete independence. The Sahassavatthupparapa shows how an amacca oppressed the people of Rohana.² Thus, although the appointment of a close relative as the governor of Rohana kept the southern regions within the king's dominions, royal authority in these areas seems to have been very loose.

The Sahassavatthupparapa discloses yet another device which the king used to maintain his supremacy over Rohana. When a certain amacca was despatched as the governor of Rohana one of his brothers served the king at the court. The amacca in Rohana oppressed the people and the news reached the king, who advised the brother at the court to look into the behaviour of his brother in Rohana. The amacca at the court, fearing that the king's displeasure might come upon him, appealed to his brother in Rohana to give up his oppressive policy;³ clearly the king was keeping a hostage at Anuradhapura to insure the conduct of the governor in Rohana. This policy is exactly the same as that adopted by the Kandyan kings who kept hostages from the family of Adigars who were sent to distant provinces, so that they might not betray

1. Mv.33.17-19, We may further note that the reign of the successor of Lajji Tissa also ended with political troubles. Mv.33.29-34

2. Ssvp.pp.66-67

3. Ssvp.pp.66-67

the king.¹

Rulers who had^a/close connexion with Rohana in their early careers managed to retain control over it after their accession to the Anuradhapura throne. Thus Dutṭhagāmaṇī was the champion of Rohana. Saddhā Tissa, in addition to belonging to the dynasty of Mahāgāma, acted as governor of Rohana during the reign of his brother.² Lajji Tissa also was governor of Rohana under Saddhā Tissa.³ Vatṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya spent most of his exile in Rohana and his campaign against Tamils began there.⁴ Mahādāthika Mahānāga was the uparāja of his father in Rohana.⁵

1. John Davy, An account of the Interior of Ceylon And of its Inhabitants with Travels in that Island. London. 1821.p.322
2. Mv.32.2; 33.14, Saddhā Tissa stayed in Dīghavāpi in his brother's time, apparently as the provincial governor.
3. Mv.33.14-19, Lajji Tissa stayed at Dīghavāpi when Saddhā Tissa left for Anuradhapura, probably in his father's office.
4. Mv.33.62, Malaya is loosely applied to the mountainous regions of which a considerable part belonged to Rohana.
5. JRAS.CB.XXXVI.No.98.pp.60-65

Finally Ilanāga started his campaigns to regain his kingdom from Rohana.¹ And these were the very rulers whose authority was felt more strongly in the eastern and southern provinces; their presence in Rohana even for a short while served to a great extent to establish the authority of the Anuradhapura king in these regions. Nevertheless the dominance they claimed was loose and ephemeral; for the absence of inscriptions and religious activities even in the succeeding reigns demonstrates the superficiality of the authority they exercised.

A further stage of the development of the political authority of the Anuradhapura king is visible with the dynasty starting from Vasabha. Two inscriptions of Vasabha are found at Saṇḍagiri Vihara in Tissamahārāma in the Māgaṃ Pattu. One of these records a land grant to supply oil for the lamps in the Chapter house of the Vihara.² The other grants certain shares in the Dūratissa tank for the benefit of the same institution.³ These two inscriptions are definite evidence that Vasabha exerted far more authority over Rohana than any other ruler, since by this time the king could not only see that grants were made to monasteries but also specify the way in which such benefits should be utilised. Vasabha's death bequeathed a period of

1. Mv.35.27-33

2. CJSG.II.p.25 (399)

3. CJSG.II.p.25 (400)

turmoil to the country, as may be gleaned from the Hābāssa inscription¹ and the Rājāvaliya.² The Hābāssa inscription found in the Badulla District speaks of an Utara maharaja, a son of Vahaba maharaja, who, as is obvious from the title maharaja taken by Utara, did not acknowledge the authority of the Anuradhapura king. Another inscription at Tammānnāva speaks of a Dutaga maharaja, son of Vahaba.³ In addition to these the Rājāvaliya records a south Indian invasion in the reign of Vasabha's successor, Vankanāsika Tissa, an incident which is to a certain extent supported by outside sources.⁴

All this would have hampered the extension of the power of the king if not for Gajabāhu whose prowess is eulogised in the Rājāvaliya.⁵ Gajabāhu brought the whole country under his authority and consolidated his power by a matrimonial alliance with his agnate relatives.⁶ The inscriptions of Gajabāhu in Rohana are proof that his authority was unchallenged in that area. An inscription at Godavāya, Māgaṃ Pattu Hambantota District, records a grant of the custom duties (suka) of the

1. EZ.IV.pp.213-217

2. Rājāvaliya.p.33

3. EZ.IV.p.215

4. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.184 ff

5. Rājāvaliya.pp.33-34

6. EZ.IV.pp.214-217

seaport of Godavāya (Godapavata) made by king Gajabāhu to a monastery;¹ another at Situlpavuva registers the grant of fines from the high court of two villages to a monastery.² The latter inscription expressly states that every day two kahāpanas (pieces of money) should be assigned to the Sangha to meet the expenses incurred on medicine. The granting of customs duties at a small southern seaport implies that the administrative machinery functioned effectively even in these southern extremities of the Island, and the second inscription shows that the king's courts were working efficiently in Rohana.

The authority established by Vasabha and Gajabāhu over the province of Rohana seems to have been maintained by the kings who succeeded them. Various grants made by kings show that they not only derived revenue from tanks and fields in Rohana but that they held some of these in personal ownership, in contrast with the king's general right of taxation exercised over these areas.³ At Situlpavuva king Kaniṭṭha Tissa made a grant of dakapati (water share)⁴ of a tank which he caused to be dug; the specific purpose for which this grant is to be

1. CJSG.II.p.197 (586)

2. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (65)

3. See below, pp. 270-3

4. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (66)

used is also set out in the document.¹ An inscription of this king at Nelumpatpokuna, Yāla East, Batticaloa District grants dakapati after stopping kara (king's dues) and this makes it certain that dues were systematically collected from Rohana.² In this instance also the specific purpose for which the benefit should be used is set out. A third inscription at Line Malai is dated in the reign of Kaniṭṭha Tissa; this document registers a grant made by a raṭiya who was governing the district of Ūva (huvahaka)³. The inscription has a very important bearing on the expansion of royal authority. Previously, Ūva had been governed directly by the provincial ruler of Rohana; the raṭiya in this grant, however, refers directly to the king of Anuradhapura. The appointment as governor of the Province of Ūva of a dignitary whose direct allegiance was to the king of Anuradhapura and not to the local ruler of Mahāgāma, the provincial capital of Rohana, must have reduced the prestige enjoyed by the provincial ruler of Rohana. Finally the Nelugala inscription mentions the king's Commander in Chief named Ahali.⁴ This is the first

1. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (66)

2. Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume. p.64

3. UCR.VIII.p.127

4. ASCAR. 1897.p.15

time that a Commander in Chief appears in this part of the Island after the time of Saddhā Tissa. The stationing of the Commander in Chief in Rohana suggests that these remote areas were brought under more effective control from Anuradhapura.

An inscription just outside our period illustrates the expansion of the king's power in another direction. This is the Rōkunuviṭa inscription¹ found in the Kalutara District, Western Province, containing the name of Sirimeghavaṇṇa, the son and successor of Mahāseṇa.² This is the first document of an Anuradhapura king in the Western Province. This area, thickly covered in jungle, was one of the regions colonised by early settlers, as can be gathered from the early Brahmi inscriptions scattered here³ but around the first century A.D. the population was forced to migrate to the dry zone.⁴ No royal document referring to the king of Anuradhapura was discovered in these parts of the Island until the one mentioned above, and this solitary example may have been due to a few colonists who refused to migrate to other areas. Whatever may be the cause of this sudden appearance of the inscription at the time of

1. CJSG.II.p.207 (633)

2. Cv.37.53

3. See for instance, ASC.Report on Kegalle District 1892.pp.68-72

4. See below, pp. 257-8

Sirimeghavanna, it shows the expansion of royal power in the Western Province.

Thus it is apparent that the kings of the line of Vasabha exerted far greater influence and authority over the provinces of Rohana than the earlier kings had done. However, since the documents at our disposal are limited to the reigns of a few kings, it may be hazardous to form a general opinion. Perhaps the silence of the chronicles regarding any uprising in Rohana during this period could be interpreted to show that the king maintained a constant overlordship in the southern regions, particularly after the reign of Gajabāhu, and that this continued right down to the Tamil aggression in the reign of Mittasena.¹

However, it should be observed that the power of the king depended mostly on the character of the king and his personal ability as well as upon the relationship between the king and the local ruler in Rohana. For, in the period immediately after the reign of Vasabha there were maharajas or independent rulers in Rohana though only for a short period.² But in the reign of Gajabāhu there was an uparāja in Rohana; although this uparāja acknowledges his inferior position by assuming the less pretentious designation of uparāja he still does not refer to

1. Cv.38.11

2. EZ.IV.pp.214-217

his overlord.¹ This may be compared with the attitude of ameti Isigiriya who was the governor of Nāgadīpa, mentioned in the Vallipuram Gold Plate,² and the raṭiya³ mentioned in the Line Malai inscription as holding office in Ūva, who do not fail to refer to their overlords at Anuradhapura. The yuvarājas and uparājas of a later date always mention the king of Anuradhapura in their grants.⁴ An exception to this is the fact that the uparāja of Gajabāhu does not mention his overlord in the Hābāssa inscription; even so, Gajabāhu had the necessary administrative machinery to divert the customs duties of a small seaport in southern extremities of the Island,⁵ and fines derived from the courts of two villages in Rohana⁶ demonstrating his authority over the uparāja. Hence Rohana turned out to be a subordinate principality without having a royal house of its own and was for the most part governed either by the members of the royal family or by royal officers, but it was not incorporated as an integral part of the Anuradhapura kingdom.

1. EZ.IV.pp.214-217

2. EZ.IV.pp.229-237

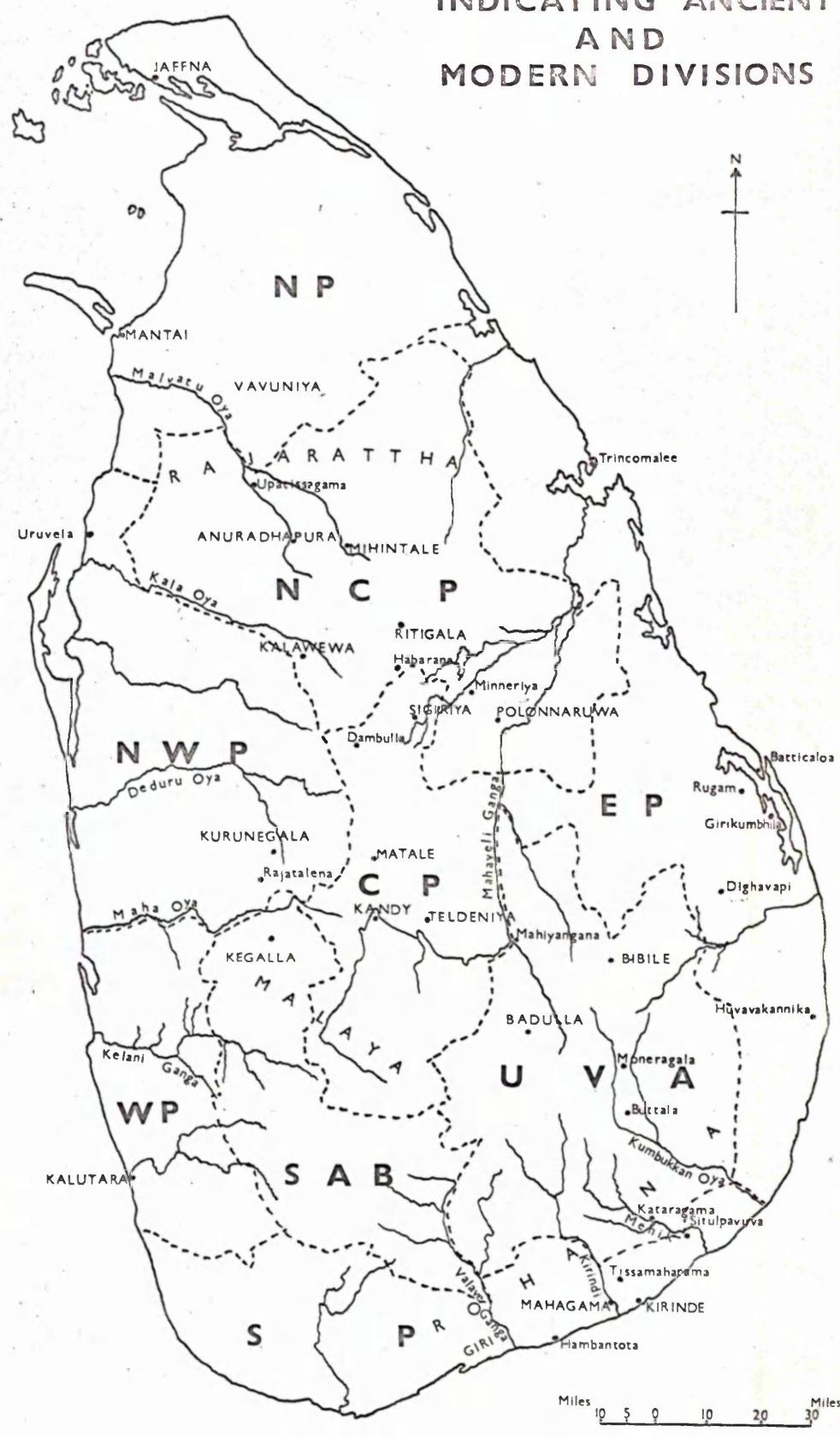
3. UCR.VIII.p.127

4. See for instance, Puliyankulam Slab Inscription of Udā mahayā, EZ.I.p.185, LI.1-5, 21-23

5. CJSG.II.p.197 (586)

6. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (65)

MAP OF CEYLON INDICATING ANCIENT AND MODERN DIVISIONS



Of the various factors which contributed to the growth of the political power of the king from the time of Vasabha, economic factors rank first in importance. Vasabha inaugurated a period of economic activity by constructing reservoirs and canals to retain and regulate the monsoons waters that fed the rivers which ran dry during the hot season. The immigrants who colonised the Island were all agriculturalists and, their main crop being rice, they needed a regular supply of water for paddy cultivation; it is for this reason that the early settlements of immigrants centred around rivers.¹ However they soon realised that the rain water was insufficient to cultivate land for an ever-increasing population. The result was their attempt to make artificial arrangements so that rain water was preserved and stored up to be used during the hot season. The necessity for this must have been badly felt at times, for, from the very beginning there were failures of monsoon rains and consequent famines.²

Hence, even before Vasabha, kings took an interest in building up tanks to retain rain water,³ but irrigation

1. Mv.7.43-45; Cf.notes 3,4,5 to p.58 of Geiger's Mahāvamsa translation; Mv.9.9-10; UHC.I.Pt.1 pp.218-219

2. Mv.32.29; Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.593,Ll.7-11;
Sammohavinodanī.pp.445-447, 449-450

3. Mv.34.32-33; Mv.35.5

activities of magnitude started only with Vasabha, who built twelve tanks and canals to 'make the land more fruitful'.¹ Being a usurper and aware of the instability of his power,² Vasabha may have taken this extraordinary interest in irrigation with the selfish motive of consolidating his power. Whatever may have been the reasons which motivated Vasabha, the irrigation work did help to consolidate his power and he enjoyed one of the longest reigns in the Island's history.³ Vasabha's enthusiasm in building tanks and canals was kept by the kings who succeeded him⁴, but not until the time of Mahāsena did its real efflorescence take place. Mahāsena constructed sixteen tanks and canals;⁵ the Ālāhāra, Minneriya and Kaudulla scheme inaugurated by him was epoch-making in the economic history of the Island.⁶ The success of this scheme must have encouraged the damming of the Mahavāli river to construct the Pabbatanta canal.⁷ Of the kings who succeeded Mahāsena and who contributed to irrigation

1. Mv.35.94-96

2. Mv.35.59-69, Vasabha came to power by ousting Sabha, the usurper. Cf. Mv.35.71

3. Vasabha enjoyed a reign of 44 years, Mv.35.100

4. Mv.35.120;36.130-131

5. Mv.37.46-50

6. JCBRAS.NS.VII.p.52

7. JCBRAS.NS.VII.p.52

activities Dhātusena - whose name is indelibly associated with the great tank of Kālavāpi - towers above all others.¹

The significance of the irrigation activity of the kings and its effect upon kingship is only brought to light when one considers the nature of the economic structure of the Island. Apart from the kula (family) the smallest unit of administration was the gāma (village).² Brohier points out that gāma was synonymous with tank (vāpi) in these early days, thereby implying that the population in the Island was composed of a number of agricultural units each of which shared a tank and fields below them.³ Hundreds of such small tanks are mentioned in both private and royal inscriptions;⁴ these are not mentioned in the chronicles. The building up of large tanks by the kings unified these small tanks under a complicated irrigation system; it was from the king's large reservoirs that water for these small tanks was obtained. Parallel to the development of irrigation works a system of water dues was established; a cluster of terms used to denote these water dues frequently occurs in the inscriptions but their meaning is not yet finally

1. Cv.38.42,92-103

2. CCM.p.142 (134); UHC.I.Pt.1.p.216 f

3. Brohier, Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon. Pt.II.p.2

4. JCBRAS.NS.VII.p.49

settled.¹ All this terminology implies a well organised and complicated system of revenue administration resulting from the economic activity. Because of this the isolated system of rural government must have been brought under a comprehensive network of local government primarily designed for fiscal purposes and later expanded to cover other fields as well.²

The additional wealth brought into the royal treasury because of this economic activity is another factor which promoted the power and prestige of the king. The increase of the king's wealth was three-fold. First, the king as the owner of most of the storage tanks derived revenue by selling water to the owners of minor tanks or canals or directly to field owners;³ second, the irrigation must necessarily have

1. JCBRAS.NS.VII.p.49

2. Cf. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism. New Haven. 1957 (3 rd. printing 1959) pp.12,18,27,164. Wittfogel advances the thesis that in many ancient oriental societies where cultivation depended on artificial irrigation (hydraulic societies) the king became a despot by controlling irrigation and the bureaucracy attached to it. Although the Anuradhapura kingdom could be described as a "hydraulic society" the king could never become a despot. See, Leach, E.R. "Hydraulic Society in Ceylon" Past and Present No. 15. April 1959. pp.2-26

3. Cf. the interpretation given to dakapati and bhojakapati by L.S. Perera, CJHSS.vol.2.No.1.pp.22 ff

stimulated economic activity entailing prosperity which would have increased the king's revenue from taxes; and finally, large scale irrigation works brought under the plough large tracts of land the disposal of which was completely at the king's discretion.

A considerable part of such land must have been given to temples, as is recorded in the chronicles.¹ Some must have been given to new officers appointed because of this economic activity, and to other high dignitaries of state in lieu of remuneration. That there was a landed aristocracy in the Island is confirmed by the Cūlavamsa which refers to kulīnas and kulagāmakas whose land Dhātusena confiscated and left unprotected when they failed in their duty (i.e. to protect the Sasana and the king).² A part of the new land brought under the plough must have been cultivated as the king's private property and the whole income must have gone to the treasury.

The results of this additional wealth were two-fold; first, it filled the treasury, and, second, the system of granting land to the officers made them more and more dependent on the king who could always rescind the grants.³

1. For instance, Vasabha who started the building of tanks etc.

was the first king to make such large land grants. Mv. 35.83-86

2. Cv. 38.38-39

3. There is no positive evidence that the granting of land for services started with Vasabha's line, but certainly this would have become popular after him because the king had sufficient land to grant.

One outcome of the new economic activity was the growth of population in the Anuradhapura kingdom, which placed the king in a dominating position in relation to local rulers. This may have happened by natural means or perhaps by measures purposely undertaken by the king to move centres of population. The epigraphical evidence suggests that by the first century A.D. there was a widespread distribution of population in the wet zone,¹ but from this time onward up to the tenth century there is an epigraphical gap which suggests a sudden depopulation of the whole area.² Nicholas points out the striking contrast of this to the continuity of epigraphical records in the dry zone and takes this as a cogent reason to suppose that there was an exodus of population from these areas to the dry zone.³ Since this coincides with the commencement of large scale irrigation works in the dry zone this supposed migration may have been designed to meet the demand for labour. The possibility of a certain amount of coercion on the part of the king is also considered by Nicholas.⁴ In spite of the fact that such a possibility cannot be ruled out it is more likely that the people voluntarily left for the dry zone

1. ASC. Report on Kegale District. 1892. pp. 68-72

UHC. I. Pt. 1. pp. 221-222

2. UHC. I. Pt. 1. pp. 221-222

3. JCBRAS. NS. VII. Pt. 1. p. 46; UHC. I. Pt. 1. p. 222

4. Nicholas, Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval

Ceylon. pp. 122-123; UHC. I. Pt. 1. p. 222

because cultivation is more profitable and easier in the dry zone if water is adequately supplied. We may note in this connexion that Kauṭilya advises the king to induce the people to bring uncultivated land under plough.¹ Whatever the cause of this exodus, it must necessarily have added to the power of the king, for labour, then more than now, was the source of all wealth and ultimately of all power.

Irrigation activities enhanced royal glamour in a more subjective way. The irrigation works of Mahāsena elevated him to the rank of a god, as is evident from later tradition.² His achievements must have increased in importance because of the failure of monsoon and the consequent famine at a slightly later period.³ Even today the local people of the area worship Mahāsena as Minneriya deviyo (God of Minneri) and Hatrajjuruvo (noble king or the Bodhisatva king).⁴ Similarly the spirit of Dhātusena is thought to haunt his great work of Kālavāpi.⁵ The irrigation activities of the kings were considered a part of their meritorious work, enumerated in the chronicles among

1. Arthaśāstra.Bk.II.ch.1.47

2. Brohier, Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon.Pt.I.p.4,20

3. Cv.37.189

4. Brohier, Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon.Pt.I.p.4,20

UCBRAS.NS.VII.p.52

5. Brohier, Ancient Irrigation works in Ceylon.Pt.2,p.3 ff

the punyakriyā (meritorious deeds) and placed in the same category as erecting religious edifices.¹

New religious ideas that found their way to Ceylon also contributed to the growth of the power of the king. From the time of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya when the Abhayagiri Vihara formed a dissident school heterodox ideas flowed into the Island.² Mahāyanism was making great headway in India with the stimulus it received from scholars like Vasubandhu and Asanga, and this was felt in the Island through the Abhayagiri Vihara which was in touch with the religious developments in India.³ According to Theravada Buddhism, the king was only a servant of the people appointed by them in order to protect society from chaos, and for this reason he received a portion of field produce.⁴ But the Mahāyānists held different ideas and their attitude is graphically illustrated in the Suvarṇaprabhasa Sūtra which explains that a king born among men is called deva and devaputra

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1. The Mahāvamsa enumerates the various Viharas built by the king at the end of every king's reign and it is here that irrigation works are also mentioned. See, Mv.35.94-99; 36.131; 37.47-50
 2. Paranavitana, 'Mahāyanism in Ceylon' CJSG.II.pp. 35 ff
 3. The Age of Imperial Unity. pp.387 ff; CJSG.II.pp.35 ff
Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon. p.85
 4. Dīgha Nikāya.III.pp.92-93

because he is sprung from the gods and thirty-three gods contributed to his substance.¹ This same idea was fostered by the Hindu law-givers.²

In addition to these factors the cult of the Bodhisattva which reached the Island as a result of Mahāyāna ideas helped to elevate the king's position. The king came to be regarded as a Bodhisattva; a good example of this in the Island is Sirisanghabodhi,³ whose name, or rather title, was taken by later kings and from the 9th century became one of the most popular royal titles.⁴

The constant threat of south Indian aggression and the consequent growth of the regular army was another factor which promoted the king's power. From its very inception the new colony had to face the problem of south Indian invasions starting with the invasion of Sena and Guttika⁵ and followed by that of Elāra;⁶

1. Suvarnaprabhāsa Sūtra.XII.5-12 (edited by Hokei Idzumi.pp.125 ff)

2. Manu.VII.4-5

3. Mv.36.90, Sirisanghabodhi is called a mahāsatta - Bodhisattva (B.bodhisatta). The Mahāvamsa depicts his life as that of a saint.

4. UHC.I.Pt.1.pp.364-365

5. Mv.21.10-11

6. Mv.21.13-14

when Elāra was defeated Bhalluka, a relative of Elāra's senāpati, landed in the hope of retrieving the lost kingdom, only to be defeated by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.¹ Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī's reign saw a repetition of this and seven Tamils invaded the country: two of them left the Island with their loot but five ruled the country in quick succession until the last of them was deposed by Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.² A south Indian invasion in the reign of Vankanāsika Tissa and a reprisal in the following reign is recorded in the Rājāvaliya.³ Though much reliance cannot be placed on this source for the history of the ancient period, scholars have pointed out that there is a certain amount of confirmation of this episode in outside sources.⁴ Vasabha made provision to protect the capital by raising the city ramparts⁵ and Gajabāhu made arrangements to guard the sea coast.⁶ These steps must have been taken in expectation of the attack and again after beating back the enemy, in expectation of a fresh attack, if the south Indian invasion recorded in the Rājāvaliya is given credence.

1. Mv.25.76-93

2. Mv.33.39-78

3. Rājāvaliya.pp.33-34

4. UHC.I.Pt.1.p.184 f

5. Mv.35.96-97

6. Rājāvaliya.p.12

Common obstacles which threatened the life of the whole community were always a unifying element in society because of the joint arrangements made to overcome them.¹ Thus this constant threat of south Indian aggression must have been one of the factors which helped to unify the Island under the leadership of the king, thereby promoting the power of the king as well. The hold that some kings such as Vasabha, Gajabāhu and Kaniṭṭha Tissa maintained in the southern parts of the Island presupposes the existence of a considerable standing army.² More evidence could be brought forward to substantiate this from the period that followed; Buddhādāsa appointed physicians to royal soldiers,³ and this shows the growth of royal army. After Dhātusena we see a further development of this process. When the Island was liberated from the foreign yoke, Dhātusena built twenty-one fortresses to protect the land from the ravages of foreigners.⁴

Finally, members of the royal family tended to marry among themselves and this made them an exclusive community and raised the king's prestige. The Hābāssa inscription shows that Gajabāhu married one of the daughters of his paternal uncle.⁵ The

1. Hocart, Kings and Councillors. pp.38-39

2. See above, pp. 244 ff

3. Cv.37.147

4. Cv.38.36

5. EZ.IV.pp.214-217

Vessagiriya inscription of Sirināga II shows that Sirināga I was married to a daughter of one of his paternal uncles.¹ Such consanguineous marriages were very common in the royal family in the ninth and tenth centuries, a period for which we have detailed information about the kinship relations of the Sinhalese royalty.² This was done purposely to preserve the purity of royal blood and it could not have been otherwise during the period under consideration. But since at the beginning of our period the kings married the daughters of nobles,³ the close marriage alliances within the royal family which we see some time later must have sharply distinguished kings from nobles.

Thus we see that before the time of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya the power of the king was geographically limited to the modern Northern, North Central and North Western Provinces, but the spread of the authority of the Rohana kingdom resulted in the king's supremacy over the whole Island, even though the remote provinces were left completely at the hands of provincial rulers. With the dynasty of kings of the line of Vasabha a much more realistic authority was established and, under able kings like Vasabha, Gajabāhu and Kaniṭṭha Tissa, the king's supremacy was unchallenged. Various reasons, economic, religious, political, military, and social, helped to promote royal power in the period after Vasabha.

1. EZ.IV.pp.220 f

2. Cy.51.15-19; 51.90-93; 52.1-2

3. See above, p. 113

CHAPTER VII

Extent and Limitation of Royal Power

The purpose of this chapter is to examine various attributes of royal power and its limitations. The king's power covered the spheres of the judiciary, land, succession to the throne, selection of state officials, labour of his subjects, etc., but for various reasons the king could not exercise absolute power over these spheres.

The king was regarded as the fountain-head of justice, which was carried out in his name. Phussadeva, one of the ten paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, shot an arrow at Bhalluka who was seated behind the king on the state elephant and immediately afterwards cut off his earlobe and showed it to the king stating that he had inflicted royal punishment (rājadandam) on himself.¹ Thus justice was carried out in the name of the king.

Chronicles as well as Pali commentaries show the ancient kings' love of justice. The legends connected with Elāra

1. My.25.88-97; The Vamsatthappakāsinī explaining this states that Phussadeva punished himself in this way because he violated the law by releasing an arrow without the king's permission and also because the arrow struck the king's earring. Vamsatthappakāsinī. pp.487-488

graphically illustrate this point; the king did not hesitate to extend justice even to the animal world,¹ and he deferred to justice even to the extent of executing his own son for committing a 'crime'.² Such stories may not be taken at their face value, for similar stories are woven around the mythical Coḷa king Manu Coḷa.³ More historical is the account found in the Vamsatthappakāsinī which states that king Bhātika Abhaya was so engrossed in a lawsuit - an appeal case which had been badly judged earlier - that he forgot to pay reverence to the Mahācetiya in the evening, which he did regularly without fail every day.⁴ The Visuddhimagga states that a righteous king of impartial mind would certify the judgements of vohārika mahāmattas (ministers of justice), thus conforming to the ancient rājadhamma.⁵ The Saddhammappakāsinī furnishes us with similar information.⁶

Even when the king could not carry out justice because it came into conflict with ideal Buddhist life, he tried to show that justice had been done although it was not actually

1. Mv.21.13 ff

2. Mv.21.16-18

3. Nilakanta Sastri, The Coḷas.I.p.12

4. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.553 Ll.12-23

5. Visuddhimagga.p.670

6. Saddhammappakāsinī.I.p.26

done. Thus Sirisanghabhodi released the rebels and allowed them to get away at night but he secured dead bodies and burnt those during the day time as if they were the bodies of the rebels.¹ The king Upatissa released criminals at night because of his extreme compassion and had a dead body brought and burnt in the day time.²

The above information also has the implication that the king had the power of inflicting capital punishment. There is corroborative evidence which supports this. King Elāra executed his own son when he was found guilty of a 'crime'.³ King Kanirajānu Tissa did not hesitate to hurl down the precipice of Kanira the sixty bhikkhūs found guilty of treason.⁴ The Visuddhimagga also shows that the king had this power.⁵

Elāra, it is believed, had a bell hung in the royal chamber so that anyone who was in search of justice could ring it.⁶ The Bell of Justice was a common feature in most oriental countries and was known in Burma, Cambodia, and Siam;⁷

1. Mv. 36.80-81

2. Cv. 37.205-206

3. Mv. 21.16-18

4. Mv. 35.9-11

5. Visuddhimagga. p.645

6. Mv. 21.15

7. Quaritch Wales, Siamese State Ceremonies, p.190

this is a vestige of a practice from the remote past when the leader could and actually did hear all the complaints of his subjects.¹ Everybody had access to justice even to the extent of appealing to the king himself. This fact is supported by the Papañcasūdanī which states that any person was given a hearing before being punished unless he was caught red-handed while committing a crime, in which case punishment was summarily meted out.² The Manorathapūranī contains an episode in which a man was engaged in a soliloquy on his way to courts arguing for and against his case and on reaching the court he won the day by arguing out his case on similar lines.³ This indicates the important point that the people were at liberty to argue their cases in front of judges.

There seems to have been a supreme court which the king presided over. The Saddhammappakāsinī informs us that eight judges sat on this court which seems to have been the ultimate court of appeal.⁴ According to the Papañcasūdanī if a dispute arisen in a gāma could not be decided by the gāmabhojaka, it was referred to the janapada bhokjaka; if he failed it went

1. Quaritch Wales, Siamese State Ceremonies, p.190

2. Papañcasūdanī.IV.p.233

3. Manorathapūranī.II.pp.269-270

4. Saddhammappakāsinī.I.p.26

to the viniccaya mahāmacca; if the viniccaya mahāmacca was unable to decide he appealed to senāpati. The senāpati in his turn appealed to the king and the decision of the king was final.¹ Thus the royal court of justice seems to have functioned mainly as an appeal court, although there is no reason to limit its scope to appeal cases alone. That this supreme court acted as an appeal court is also confirmed by the Vamsatthappakāsinī.²

The king sometimes delegated judicial powers to any person he liked: an important episode bearing on this subject appears in the Samantapāsādikā. The story goes that king Bhātika Abhaya was so well satisfied with a decision given by Ābhidhammika Godha thera regarding a quarrel between two monks about a theft that the king appointed the said thera as supreme judge over both bhikkhūs and laymen. Anyone who would not abide by his decision was made to concur by his majesty's order.³

By the time of Mahāsena the judiciary had developed into a separate specialised department under a viniccaya mahāmacca. The charge against thera Kohontissa for committing an offence of pārājikā was referred to the viniccaya mahāmacca, who, on hearing the case and finding the thera guilty, expelled him from the order even against the wishes of the king whose

1. Papañcasūdanī.II.p.253

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī.p.553, see above, p 265

3. Samantapasadika.pp.306-307

favourite the thera was.¹ The high respect enjoyed by this minister of justice was such that the king acquiesced to this decision.

The king granted amnesty to criminals on special occasions such as on the days of national and religious celebrations. Mahānāga, the ruler of Rohana, released prisoners from confinement when Lalāṭa dhātu was brought to Mahāgāma,² and so did Sirimeghavanna on the occasion when he inaugurated the ceremony of Mahinda.³

There is hardly any evidence showing how the judiciary functioned at a lower level except for a solitary reference found in one of the inscriptions of Gajabāhu. An inscription of Gajabāhu at Situlpavuva registers a donation by the king to a monastery of a sum of money derived as fines from the high courts (mahavinici) in two villages of Rohana.⁴ This implies that the mahavinici came under the authority of the king. The existence of high courts also implies the existence of lower courts. The fact that Gajabāhu donated the fines from courts in such remote parts of the Island suggests that royal courts functioned efficiently throughout the Island.

1. Mv.37.38-39

2. Dhātuvamsa.p.17

3. Cv.37.71

4. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (65)

An important aspect of royal power was the right that the king exercised over land. Geiger has shown that during medieval times the king was the sole proprietor of the Island to such an extent that the administration of the land becomes intelligible only when this principle is accepted.¹ Geiger states that when the king made grants of land he retained the proprietary rights and could rescind the grants at any time.² L.S. Perera discussing the proprietary rights of the king in early Ceylon adduces the statement in the Mahāvamsa that the thera Sanghamitta induced the king to seize the property of the Mahavihara on the ground that ownerless property belongs to the king, and suggests that land in continuous occupation could not be seized by the king; therefore land ownership on some occasions at least was not dependent on the king.³ Whatever may be the final conclusion about the king's powers over land, the occasion referred to above is too isolated to justify a generalization,⁴ because it refers to an instance where two powerful institutions

1. JGIS.VI.p.84; CCM.p.50 f

2. JGIS.VI.pp.84-85

3. CJHSS.2 No.1.p.3

Vihara were in a deadly struggle in ^{which} the king was involved. See,
 4. This is an instance when the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiri

Vihara were in a deadly struggle in ^{which} the king was involved. See,

My.ch.37

were at each other's throats, and Sanghamitta, a veteran Sanskrit scholar, might have brought forward, in order to justify an action of the king, this Indian dogma which under normal conditions would not have been considered necessary at all.¹

Epigraphical information establishes that common people had the right to buy and donate land,² and this implies that they enjoyed proprietary rights over such land. More important are the references found in the chronicles and inscriptions where it is stated that the king bought land from the people. King Sabha bought the Upaladonika tank for five hundred kaḥāpanas and donated it to the Ekadvāra monastery.³ Gajabāhu bought land from various owners and donated it to the brotherhood.⁴ Kāśyapa bought land and gave it to the Viharas he built.⁵ King Kumāra Dhātusena bought tanks and land for a similar purpose.⁶

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1. Mv. 36.112-113, Sanghamitta is said to be versed in black magic etc. No doubt he was a Sanskrit scholar (the Mahāyānist canon was in Sanskrit), a contemporary of Asanga and Vasubandhu. Cf. Parānavitana, 'Mahāyānism in Ceylon', CJSG.II.p.41
 2. ASC.SPR. 1896.pp.55-56.II,III,IV.; UCR.VIII.p.120, (Ilukvāva inscription); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.155
 3. EZ.III.p.165
 4. Mv. 35.118,121
 5. Cv. 39.10
 6. EZ.IV.pp.123-124

The Mahāvamsa states that the queen mother of Gajabāhu bought a plot of land to build a Vihara¹ and the Vilevāva inscription states that she spent money to buy a tank for donation.² All this information suggests first, that the people had inalienable rights over land and second, that the king would not violate such rights.

Our chronicles furnish more evidence to support this suggestion. Gajabāhu founded a nunnery for his mother on a plot of land belonging to his own family (kulasante gharatthāne).³ The Vamsatthappakāsini explains kulasante'ti as kulasantake.⁴ Geiger equates kulasantakagāma with paveni gāma which he thinks is the land granted by the kings to officials for services rendered; some such grants were hereditary and hence they were called pavenigāma.⁵ However, it is not certain whether or not this parallel holds good in our period, for pavenigāma is a term which appears at a later date. It may be that kulasantakagāma first meant the land held by extended families when society was based on the extended family rather than on the nuclear family. Whatever may be the correct interpretation of the term, this differentiation of the kulasantakagāma of the

1. Mv.35.117

2. ASC.SPR.1896.p.58 (57)

3. Mv.34.36

4. Vamsatthappakāsini.p.628, Ll.21

5. JGIS.V.pp.3-4

king has the implication that the king did not enjoy the same rights over the land cultivated by the people. King Kaniṭṭha Tissa refers to a donation of some tanks which belonged to him.¹ Kumāra Dhātusena also mentions some tanks which he owned as compared with tanks and fields which he bought for donation.² The principle involved for tanks may be the same as that for land.

Hence the power that the king exercised over land during our period was one of a more general kind as the head of state. For the protection he afforded, everybody was expected to pay him a share of the produce, and it is for this reason that the king was regarded as eating the earth³ and not because he exercised unlimited power over land.

Closely associated with the king's power over land was the privilege of taxation which the king seems to have enjoyed from the earliest historical times. The term used for this is bali which in Sanskrit was used in various meanings such as tribute, offering, gift, oblation, impost and royal revenue.⁴

1. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (66), Cf.EZ.IV.p.127-128 for the meaning of atini simaya which is equivalent to modern Sinhalese ,taman himi 'belonging to oneself'.

2. EZ.IV.pp.123-124, see also, pp.127-128

3. Cv.38.28. 'bhunjate'yaṃ mahim itī'

4. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv.Monier Williams:

The same ambiguity of meaning in the use of the term may be observed in our chronicles. Vijaya promised to offer Kuveni bali by spending a thousand pieces of money¹ and Paṇḍukābhaya annually offered bali to his yakkha friends.² Sirisanghabodhi promised to install bali in every village for the yakkha Ratakkhi.³ Elāra was informed of the decision of the celestial court by the baliggāhaka devaputta who used to dwell on his chatra.⁴ The Manorathapūranī divides bali into five sections as follows; nātibali (bali given to relatives), atithibali (bali given to guests), pubbapeta bali (bali given to dead relatives), rājabali (that which is to be rendered to the king), devabali (that which is to be rendered to genies).⁵

But the term is used in the sense of a tax in the reign of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī; the king was reluctant to raise bali (balimuddhattum) to meet the expenses that would be incurred on erecting the Mahāthūpa, as the people had already undergone hardships in overthrowing the foreign yoke.⁶ King Bhātika Abhaya

1. Mv.7.61

2. Mv.10.86

3. Mv.36.89

4. Mv.21.30

5. Manorathapūranī.III.pp.99-100

6. Mv.28.4-5

remitted to the area around the city the bali that was levied on his behalf (attano bali mujjhivā).¹ The accomplice of Abhayanāga, Subhadeva, exacted undue bali (adhammika baliuddhara-nādikam) which alienated the people from the king.² The Papañcasūdanī informs us that the king took mahābali from a village whereas bhojakas received the trifling revenues (parittam āyam).³

The Samantapāsādikā states that the area where the bhojakas received bali was considered to be within the limits of the village (gāmasīmā) irrespective of its geographical extent.⁴ This piece of evidence is very important since it gives us two-fold information regarding the revenue administration in early Ceylon; first, it states the territorial basis adopted for fiscal purposes and second, it seems to indicate that the village boundaries were made specifically for the purpose of revenue administration. We may note in this context the information given in the Mahāvamsa that Paṇḍukābhaya laid down village boundaries, gāmasīmā.⁵ Whether or not we accept the statement

1. Mv. 34.40

2. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p. 663, Ll. 19-22

3. Papañcasudani. II. p. 349

4. Samantapāsādikā. pp. 1051-1052, the boundaries (simā) of nagara and nigama were reckoned in the same way.

5. Mv. 10.103

that it was this half mythical hero, Paṇḍukābhaya, who established the boundaries, the information that some ancient ruler set village boundaries is beyond dispute, and the purpose of such an act on the part of the king, whoever the king might have been, may have been for the collection of taxes on the basis of the village unit.

The Mahāvamsa reports that Sirināga remitted kulambana throughout the whole Island because of his compassion.¹ Kula stands for family and ambana is a variant of Pali ammana (Sin.amuna) which was a measure of capacity used as a corn measure.² Remitting this throughout the whole Island suggests that every kula or family of the Island had been paying this tax to the king up to the time of Sirināga. This may have been one of the earliest taxes imposed by the king, taking the kula or family as the unit when society was established more on a basis of extended families than on territorial units. By the time of Sirināga, when society and monarchy were much more advanced and taxes were collected on the basis of villages, this institution, which must already have been moribund, was officially abolished.

L.S. Perera considers that taxation on the basis of villages was a gradual development owing to the expansion of the king's land

1. Mv.36.26

2. Pali Dictionary, sv.PTS., See also, Geiger's translation of the Mahāvamsa p.257. note.5 and CCM.p.83 (75)

because of irrigation works.¹ He points out that new land brought under cultivation as a result of irrigation was regarded as distinct from land already under cultivation, and since the king was mainly responsible for bringing these lands under the plough, he recovered a share from them as revenue.² This must have gradually expanded to include the older villages as well.³ But it is doubtful whether the taxation on the basis of villages started as late as the time of Vasabha, which was when the irrigation works were really begun.⁴

A further development of the principles of taxation may be seen in the Jetavanārāma inscription of Kaniṭṭha Tissa.⁵ The inscription mentions uta kubara and D.M. de Zilva Wickramasinghe takes uta as describing the special nature of the tax and compares it with the modern agricultural term otta or otu which Clough translates as tithe.⁶ The Thūpārāma slab inscription of Gajabāhu⁷ mentions uta viya and Paranavitana takes uta in this and the uta kubara of Jetavanārāma inscription as describing viya and kubara and not a tax; he equates uta with uttama. Hence it is

1. CJHSS.2.No.1.p.19

2. Ibid.

3. CJHSS.2.No.1.p.19

4. See above, pp. 252-3

5. EZ.I.pp.252-259

6. EZ.I.p.259

7. EZ.III.p.116

argued that fields were classified according to their fertility.¹ The purpose of such classification was perhaps for the sake of taxation; if so, this marks a further stage of development of taxation.

A more specific word used for royal tax in inscriptions is kara, which is a royal tax either on land or on some other source of income. In Sanskrit literature kara means royal revenue, tribute or tax.² In votive inscriptions of Ceylon, when land or some other source of income was granted to the community of monks it was sometimes added that the kara was remitted. When a grant was made to the Sangha any qualifications added to it generally mean some form of added benefit. Thus inscriptions refer to instances where the king grants dakapati (water share) and bhojakapati (proprietors share) after remitting kara. This implies that unless otherwise stated any person who received dakapati or bhojakapati, or any source of revenue or income was liable to pay kara to the king even when such grants were made by the king. To give some specific examples of this nature: king Kaniṭṭha Tissa grants dakapati after remitting kara.³ The Line Malai inscription registers a grant of dakapati after remitting kara by a raṭiya of Kaniṭṭha Tissa.⁴ In the

1. EZ.III.p.117

2. Sanskrit Dictionary, sv.Monier Williams

3. Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume.p.64

4. UCR.VIII.p.127

Nāgirikāṇḍa inscription of Kumāra Dhātusena dakapati and bhojakapati were granted to a monastery after remitting kara.¹ Hence it may be assumed that kara denoted a royal tax levied on all incomes, which must have been one of the major sources of the king's income. Since bali does not occur in the inscriptions and kara is not mentioned in literary records, these two may have denoted the same tax. This was the usage of the terms bali and kara in India.²

Among other sources of royal revenue were tariffs and customs duties levied at seaports and other places in the country. The term used for this in the inscriptions is suka, derived from Pali sunka or Sanskrit śulka. Since as early as the time of Gaṇabāhu suka was levied at such a remote and small seaport as Goḍavāya in Rohana,³ customs duties must have been levied at all the major seaports. The Samantapāsādikā discusses whether or not a bhikkhu is held guilty according to the Vinaya for not paying sunka (tolls), and the passage makes it quite plain that even the clerics were expected to pay these taxes.⁴ If people tried to avoid sunka they were

1. EZ.IV.pp.123-124

2. Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary.p.47

3. CJSG.II.p.197 (586), p.178; Text, JCBRAS.NS.V.p.78

4. Samantapāsādikā.pp.358 ff

brought before the king along with the goods.¹ The sources do not specify the exact amount charged as sunka, but Manu states that śulka was one twentieth of the value and he adds that those who try to avoid tolls should be charged eight times the amount of the duty.²

The fines imposed at law courts were another source of royal revenue, and inscriptions record that Gajabāhu granted to a monastery the fines of high courts in two villages in Rohana.³

According to Fa Hien the king claimed three tenths of the gems found in the land.⁴

Apart from various taxes and tolls, the king derived income from certain sources over which he enjoyed proprietary rights. This income is designated in the inscriptions under various terms such as dakapati,⁵ bhojakapati,⁶ (bejipeta, bojiyapati) ekapati,⁷ dopati,⁸ mahapati,⁹ dakabaka,¹⁰ etc.

1. Manorathapūraṇī.II.p.102

2. Manu.VIII.398,400

3. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (65)

4. Beal, Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims, p.148

5. EZ.I.p.255; EZ.IV.p.123; JCBRAS.NS.II.p.134 (66)

6. EZ.I.p.255; EZ.IV.p.123

7. JCBRAS.NS.V.p.155. Here the ekapati belongs to an amacca. The king may well have received ekapati, although ^{this is} not mentioned in any royal document so far found.

8. CALR.III.p.205 (No.2) p.215 (12); EZ.I.p.256; EZ.IV.p.123

9. ASC.SPR.1896.p.55 (II)

10. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.133 (63,64)

of which the precise significance is still obscure. These are literally translated as water share or revenue (dakapati = Skt. udakaprāpti), proprietor's share or revenue (bhojakapati = Skt. bhojakaprāpti), single share or revenue (ekapati = Skt. ekaprāpti), two shares or revenues (dopati = Skt. dviprāpti), the great (or major) share or revenue (mahapati = Skt. mahāprāpti) - which may also mean the king's share - and water share (dakabaka = Skt. udakabhāga). It must be noted that such sources of revenue were not restricted to the king alone, as we often come across inscriptional references to individuals who owned canals and tanks, derived such incomes, and granted them to monasteries.¹ But, since all the major irrigation works were undertaken by the king and these works reclaimed thousands of acres of previously unarable land, the king must have obtained the lion's share of such revenues.

* * * *

Before any law or convention regarding the succession to the throne was developed in Ceylon, the king exerted considerable influence in the selection of his successor. Legend maintains that Vijaya sent for his brother Sumitta and asked him to accept kingship in the Island after him;² as he himself was old, Sumitta

1. CALR.III.pp.77 (4), 207-208 (No.2); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.144 (1,2,3), p.155; EZ.V. pp. 412-418 (15).

2. Mv.8.1-3

despatched one of his sons to accept the offer.¹ Paṇḍuvāsudeva consecrated as uparāja his eldest son, who succeeded him on the throne.² Muṭasīva was succeeded by his second son who was 'the foremost among all his brothers in virtue and intelligence';³ the eldest son was apparently overlooked in preference to the second son. Devānaṃpiya Tissa appointed as uparāja, his second brother Mahānāga, who, however, could not enjoy the throne because of the scheming queen.⁴

Duṭṭhagāmaṇī entrusted the government to his brother Saddhā Tissa instead of to his own son at his death bed.⁵ The tradition that Duṭṭhagāmaṇī's son, Sāliya, rejected the throne because of his love for a Caṇḍāla girl, Aśokamālā,⁶ is certainly a later development and is completely absent from the Dīpavaṃsa. Granting that there may be a germ of truth in the legend of Sāliya and Aśokamālā, that this was the reason why Saddhā Tissa and not prince Sāliya ascended the throne is purely the reasoning of the chronicler. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī would most probably have entrusted

1. Mv.8.8-10

2. Mv.9.12-29

3. Mv.11.6-7, Cf. Samudragupta was chosen by his father at the court, Fleet, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.III.(Text and Tr.)p.11

4. Mv.22.2-6

5. Mv.32.2; 32.59-62

6. Mv.33.1-3

the arduous task of consolidating the dearly won victory to his brother, who had taken part in the campaign and also had experience in administration, rather than to a sentimental youth. The death of Saddhā Tissa saw the consecration of the younger son of the king by the amaccas with the consent of the Sangha.¹ There is a possibility that the amaccas were carrying out the wishes of the deceased king. For Saddhā Tissa brought his younger son along with him to the capital when he left Dīghavāpi and the prince remained in the court ever after. If the purpose of the visit of the prince to the court was only to get land donated by the king to the monastery he built in Rohana,² he would certainly have gone back. It is more likely that the dead king had been fond of his younger son and wanted him to succeed to the throne.

The successor of Vaṭṭhagāmanī Abhaya was Mahācūlika Mahātissa, the son of the king's predecessor, and not his own son Coranāga.³ The supporters of the theory that the throne passed on from father to son regard this as showing how Vaṭṭhagāmanī Abhaya magnanimously gave Mahācūlika Mahātissa his father's kingdom.⁴

1. Mv.33.17-18

2. Mv.33.16

3. Mv.33.55; 34.1

4. UCR.XII.p.197

However, since Vatthagāmaṇi Abhaya married the widow of his elder brother,¹ it is simpler to explain the accession of Mahācūlika Mahātissa - the son of this widow - instead of Coranāga as due to this marriage rather than to any adherence to a specific law of succession which was yet to develop.

The whole episode of Anulā also supports such a suggestion: the licentious queen would not have enthroned her paramours in sequence after poisoning her husband had there been any accepted law of succession.² Gajabāhu appointed as uparāja his brother-in-law who was also the son of his paternal uncle, and this son known as Mahallakanāga ascended the throne after Gajabāhu.³ At the death of Abhayanāga the son of Vohārika Tissa and not a son of Abhayanāga assumed the office⁴ although there is no evidence that Abhayanāga had a son of his own. But this is also an occasion when the younger brother married the widow of the elder brother.⁵

All these instances suggest that in the absence of any accepted law or convention for the succession to the throne the king generally chose his successor. Although the king's

1. Mv.33.35-36

2. Mv.34.15-27

3. EZ.IV, pp.214-217

4. Mv.36.54

5. Mv.36.51

selection was limited to the members of the royal family, he could use this power not only to keep undesirable candidates away from the throne but also to prevent them from attaining power as uparājas even within his own time. Thus the king selected his successor according to his merits from among prospective candidates of the royal family and this was in harmony with the Hindu norm, for Kauṭilya writes that a prince should be appointed as heir-apparent only when he is of good and amicable qualities.¹ This was the practice in northern India.²

* * * * *

The king exercised the power of appointing the higher dignitaries of the state. According to the Mahāvamsa, when Dīghagāmanī visited the court of Anurādhapura, king Paṇḍuvāsudeva commissioned him to serve at the court.³ Paṇḍukābhaya appointed his teacher's son Canda to the post of purohita and gave offices to his other followers.⁴ He invested his own uncle with the office of rattirajja, i.e. handed over the government to him each night; therefore the uncle became the nagaraguttika

1. Arthaśāstra.Bk.I.ch.xvii.34

2. Prasad Singh, Kingship in Northern India, p.44

3. Mv.9.13-14

4. Mv.10.79

(Superintendent of the City police).¹ After Dutṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya had unified the Island under a single banner, he distributed places of honour (ṭhānantaram = offices) among his warriors.² This power of appointing officers of state may have given the king considerable power to ensure that the amaccas or various high dignitaries of state would be loyal to him. Because of this power of the king, high dignitaries might have vied with one another to win his favour in order to obtain still higher offices. This must have been aggravated by the habit of nominating one of the amaccas to discharge special errands such as settling disputes between the two major Viharas.³ In the reign of Vatṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya an āmacca was given the office of treasurer and later entrusted with the administration of southern districts (dakkhina passa), western districts (paccima passa), and eastern districts (puratthima passa).⁴ Other amaccas may have tried to shine in the eyes of the king in order to scale the ladder and enjoy such enviable positions.

1. Mv.10.80-81

2. Mv.26.1

3. Samantapāsādikā.pp.582-583; Nks.pp.66-67

4. Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa.pp.176-177

The king could claim the services of his subjects in case of national emergency. When Dīghābhaya was sent to form the guard at Kaccakatittha he commanded in the name of the king that each noble family within a distance of two yojanas should send one son to form the guard.¹ Sūranimala one of the ten paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, was enlisted this way.² Whenever the king heard of a person gifted with extraordinary physical prowess he ordered him to attend the court. The rest of the paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī were enlisted in a similar manner.³ Not even the Sangha was always exempt, for the Rasavāhinī states that Theraputthābhaya was persuaded to give up his robes and join the army while he was yet a novice because of his superior physical strength.⁴ Duṭṭhagāmaṇī announced by the beating of the drum that all able-bodied men should assemble at Mahāgāma to march for the war of independence.⁵

The power of the king to claim the services of his subjects was considered so important that anyone connected with the royal family and administration was required to obtain royal sanction before renouncing worldly life. This agrees with the Vinaya, which forbids the Sangha to ordain a person in royal

1. Mv.23.16-18

2. Mv.23.20-44

3. Mv.23.45 ff

4. Rsv.pp.197-200

5. Rsv.pp.192; Ssvp. p.95

service.¹ The Samantapāsādikā, which is very precise in its comment, states that persons who are maintained by royal pay such as an amacca, mahāmatta or (royal) servant, whether or not bearing office (thānantaraṃ patto va apattova) should not be ordained.² They were eligible only when they relieved themselves of royal service.³ This is also a pre-requisite to attaining higher ordination.⁴ The mahāmacca of Devānaṃpiya Tissa entered the order only after securing the king's permission,⁵ and his nephew Ariṭṭha who held the rank of amacca acted similarly.⁶ The king's younger brother Mattābhaya had to beg leave of the king before he entered the Sasana,⁷ and a daughter of Saddhā Tissa had to obtain the king's permission to enter the order.⁸ The principle was applied not only to the higher dignitaries but to those of lower ranks as well. A village headman named Rohana sought the king's permission to enter the order.⁹

1. Mahāvagga.I.40

2. Samantapāsādikā.p.996

3. Samantapāsādikā.pp.996-997, Cf. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā.IV.
p.223 for similar practice.

4. Mahāvagga.I.76

5. Mv. 16.10-11

6. Mv. 18.2-6; 19.66

7. Mv. 17.57-58

8. Svp.pp.144-145

9. Mv.23.55-62

Being great patrons of Buddhism in the Island the kings hardly ever refused such appeals, but there were exceptions. For when Theraputthābhaya asked to leave the royal service in order to become a monk Duṭṭhagāmaṇī repeatedly attempted to restrain him and only consented in the end owing to the persistence of Theraputthābhaya.¹ Thus it was with difficulty that Theraputthābhaya relieved himself of royal service to fulfil his heart's desire, the pabbajjā, of which he had been deprived when he was yet a sāmanera (novice) in order to join the army, according to the Rasavāhinī.²

A more important question is whether or not the king was able to claim unpaid labour from his subjects; available information on this subject pertains only to instances when the project on which such labour was used was public work. The special emphasis given in the chronicle, that every single person involved in the construction of the Lohapāsāda and the Mahācetiya was duly paid by the king,³ may imply that the king was entitled to free labour. But inscriptional evidence contradicts this. King Sabha had to pay five hundred kahāpanas to remove silt from a tank which he donated to the Ekadvāra monastery.⁴ It may be argued that Sabha was called upon to buy

1. Mv. 26.2-4

2. Rsv. pp. 197-200 (7-8)

3. Mv. 27.21-23; 30.17-20

4. EZ. III. p. 165

labour from his subjects because he was a usurper,¹ and was regarded by his subjects as no more than a bandit. However, there are two other instances which invalidate such an argument. King Gajabāhu had to pay five thousand kahāpanas to dig a tank which he donated,² and a similar project cost Kaniṭṭha Tissa eight hundred kahāpanas.³ Tank building being work of public welfare, the king would willingly have used free labour had it been available. At a slightly later period king Uptatissa is reported to have had the work of building a thūpa performed by boys among whom he distributed sugar and rice;⁴ this he did in order to avoid alienating the people from him (by exacting forced labour).⁵ This has two implications; first, that by the time of Upatissa the king had started to claim unpaid labour from his subjects and, second, that this was not looked upon with favour by the people and could sometimes sow disaffection among them.

Thus we can explain the apparent contradiction between the statement of the Mahāvamsa which gives the impression that the king could claim free labour and the inscriptional evidence

1. Mv.35.51-56

2. EZ.I.p.211

3. JCBRASNS.II.p.134 (66)

4. Cv.37.183-184

5. Ibid.

which discloses that the king hired labour, by assuming that although the king could claim unpaid labour during the time when the Mahāvamsa was written, this was definitely not the case in the period under consideration as evidenced by the contemporary epigraphs. The author of the Mahāvamsa was apparently influenced by contemporary ideas. The reign of Upatissa shows the beginning of this development.

The king could demote a person from his social position. Bhātikābhaya, reports the Sammohavinodanī, degraded some people to the level of scavengers for eating beef.¹ Similarly the Sahassavatthuppakarapa contains an episode which relates the manner in which a rājapurisa who abused his powers and tried to bring harm to an innocent person was given as a slave to the latter.² The conflict that arose between king Ilanāga and the Lambakannas shows another instance of this nature. The king caused the contumacious Lambakannas to work under the supervision of Caṇḍālas when building a road.³

* * * *

This discussion of royal powers may give the impression that the king in ancient Ceylon exercised unlimited power;

1. Sammohavinodanī. p.440

2. Ssvp.pp.50-52

3. Mv.35.16-18

this however, is not true, because there were many checks which kept royal power within reasonable bounds.

Above all the absence of a large regular army in the early period during normal times made it unlikely that the king could pursue his own course relentlessly; later when the army increased in number the parallel development of the office of senāpati prevented the king from abusing the increased power derived from the growth of military strength.¹

There is reason to believe that the army built by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī was not maintained after the war had been won; one of the ten paladins left the army and joined the order even before the civil government was properly established.² Another soon afterwards quit royal service with dissatisfaction because on one occasion the king had treated him coldly.³ The easy elimination of the Commander in Chief of Khallāṭanāga who usurped the throne by a coup d'etat shows that the army was not powerful enough to face the followers of Vaṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya.⁴ (This remains the only such attempt by a Commander in Chief which

1. See below, p. 294

2. Mv. 26.2-5

3. Ssvp. 94-100 (44)

4. Mv. 33.33-34

failed so miserably.¹⁾ A similar fate seems to have overcome the troops collected by Vaṭṭhagāmanī Abhaya to regain his lost kingdom, for his successor could not capture the rebellious prince Coranāga.² During the reign of Kuṭakanna Tissa there lived encamped near Anuradhapura a powerful bandit named Abhaya who was the head of a large number of bandits. Because of Abhaya, men in Anuradhapura feared to cross the Kadamba river, the present Malvatu Oya, and the road to Cetiyaṭṭabbata which was only a few miles from the Capital was left untrodden.³ Such instances disclose that the king did not possess a large standing army capable of liquidating such undesirable elements. The manner in which Vasabha took power is a good example demonstrating how little military strength was felt in distant regions.⁴

By the end of our period the royal army grew in strength under the pressure of constant Tamil aggression.⁵ Although

1. See below, p. 294

2. Mv. 34.11

3. Samantapāsādikā. p.474, The bandit visited Cetiyaṭṭabbata when Elder Dīghabhānaka Abhaya, who was a contemporary of Kuṭakanna Tissa, was living there. Cf. EHBC.p.104.

4. Mv. 35.67-69

5. See above, pp. 260 ff.

this must have considerably improved the king's position, another institution grew simultaneously as if to counterbalance it. This was the senāpati who grew in power as the power of the army increased. When the country was under the Tamil yoke and the rulers could not obtain the loyalty of the subjects, the senāpati was very powerful, and four times the senāpatis overthrew the kings under whom they served.¹ The senāpati of Kuñcanāga turned against his master, captured the throne, and was known in the Island as Sirināga (I).² Sangha Tissa, the senāpati of Vijaya Kumāra, murdered the king and with the help of his two accomplices ascended the throne.³ The power acquired by the senāpati was such that the king was bound to assign the position to a close relative.⁴ A parable in the Manorathapūraṇī relates how a king entertained one of the ancient Buddhas without offering any opportunity to the common people to give alms to the Buddha and to acquire merit; the people devised a plan to have the Buddha released from the king and asked the senāpati to side with them in the attempt to stop the king from monopolising the Buddha; the senāpati readily acquiesced and when the people turned against the king the senāpati refused

1. Mv.33.56-61

2. Mv.36.21-23

3. Mv.36.62-63

4. See above, p. 159

to fight against the people, thereby making the king submit to the will of the people.¹ No doubt such stories were based on contemporary incidents.

Popular opinion remained a formidable check on the exercise of royal power, for the king realised that any act which would alienate popular sympathy was very dangerous, since it would offer an opportunity to any pretender to the throne. How keenly the king responded to popular sentiment may be seen in many instances. The people of Anuradhapura, hearing the virtues of thera Mahinda and his companions from those who had seen them on the previous day, assembled at the palace gates and made a great commotion.² Devānampiya Tissa, thoughtful for their welfare and learning the cause of the disturbance, is reported to have ordered the stable of the state elephant to be cleaned so that the people might see the thera there.³

That the people sometimes conveyed their disaffection to the king is clear from the Vamsatthappakāsinī, which states that when Vijaya behaved in an unrestrained manner in his father's kingdom the enraged people showed their annoyance by making a great noise.⁴ The Dhammapadatthakathā also reveals that this

1. Manorathapūranī. I. pp. 140-142

2. Dv. 13.1-3; Mv. 14.59-60

3. Mv. 14.60-62

4. Vamsatthappakāsinī. p. 251, Ll. 21-23

was the custom in ancient India.¹ King Saddhā Tissa, displeased with the behaviour of the monks at the Mahavihara, showered all his benefits upon the Cetiyapabbata Vihara, but the people immediately called for an explanation for this irregularity of the king who was forced to convince the people of the lack of discipline of the monks at the Mahavihara.² King Sangha Tissa was accustomed to visit the Rācīnadīpaka with all his retinue to eat Jambu fruits; the people, molested by these frequent visits, poisoned the king, thus getting rid of an unwelcomed guest.³ Vohāra Tissa with all his benefactions to the Sangha and work for the advancement of the Sasana could not withstand his brother who advanced against him, because the people were alienated from the ruler by the malefactions of Subhadeva.⁴

The king was careful to ensure that the royal officers did not exploit their power and position to oppress the people. A rājapurisa who tried to bring harm to innocent people was tendered as a slave (dāsa) to those people.⁵ The officers who

1. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. I. p. 41

2. Sammohavinodanī. p. 473

3. Mv. 36. 70-72.

4. Mv. 36. 27-51;

5. Sahassavatthupparāṇa. pp. 50-52

tried to bring harm to innocent people were given as slaves in India.¹ The Sammohavinodanī implies that when it was brought to the notice of the king that amaccas misbehaved in the provinces they were severely punished.²

The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā shows that it was the Indian practice for rulers to make nocturnal tours in their cities in disguise to detect any disaffection in the kingdom.³ If the Rājāvaliya is to be credited, Gajabāhu used to do this in Anuradhapura.⁴ Thus the king took special care to ensure that public opinion remained constantly in his favour and avoided rash deeds which would sow disaffection among his subjects.

The king had to obey the traditions of the past which were considered inviolable, and whoever transgressed these invited popular resentment. Hence the king ruled according to ancient practice. Sena and Guttika ruled the country in accordance with dhamma⁵ i.e. traditional law in this instance, for the Vamsatthappakāsini explains dhamma as cāritta (practice)

1. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. I. pp. 267-268, Cf. also, Sumangalavilāsinī. pp. 711-713

2. Sammohavinodanī. p. 442

3. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. I. pp. 251 ff

4. Rājāvaliya. p. 33

5. Mv. 21.10-11

and viniccayapavenidhamma (law practice handed down from generation to generation)¹. When Elāra invited the bhikkhūs of the Cetiyapabbata Vihara for alms he was protecting the ancient practice (cārittaṃ anupālayaṃ), although he was ignorant of the virtues of the Triple Gem.² The Vamsatthappakāsini explains cārittamanupālayanti as pavenidhammaṃ anurakkhanto viz., to preserve ancient practice is to protect traditional law.³ Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya ordered that no one but he should fight Elāra, which was ancient Kṣatriya dharma i.e. that equal should fight equal.⁴ At the end of the consecration ceremony Duṭṭhagāmaṇī celebrated a water festival in order to protect the ancient practice of crowned kings (abhisittānaṃ carittam cānurakkhitum).⁵ Although at present these traditions are not known, the king generally seems to have adhered to them and this may have formed one of the healthiest checks which prevented the abuse of royal power. In strict terms there is no Buddhist law governing such matters as politics and Buddhists adopted pre-existing customs and laws which were modified by their

1. Vamsatthappakāsini.p.425, Ll.2-4, 'carittadhammena viniccaya paveni dhammaṃ anatikkamena rajjaṃ kāresuṃ'ti attho'

2. Mv.21.21-22

3. Vamsatthappakāsini.p.426, Ll.22-23

4. Mv.25.67

5. Mv.26.7

ethics. These rules may have been equal to the code of law set out for kings in the rājadharmā of Manu and others, with modifications necessary in a Buddhist society.

Nobility in all ages was one of the forces, perhaps one of the strongest, which bridled royal power. Until the first century A.D. local ayas remained a strong limitation to the exercise of the king's power.¹ More important were the parumakas who filled in the ranks of administration.² The close social links among parumakas as well as the hereditary character of these nobles must have made them a formidable check on the king.³ Besides them there were Bodhāhāarakulas who, because of their close association with the Sangha and the position they held as the guardians of the Bodhi tree, must have claimed a very enviable position.⁴ From the first century A.D. another group, the Lambakaṇṇas, appears on the scene and within a short period they captured the throne.⁵

The hereditary character of the nobility was not restricted to the upper ranks for a similar tendency is visible in the lower strata of the administration as well. In general, the position

1. See above, pp. 100 ff.

2. See above, pp. 107 ff.

3. See above, pp. 109 ff.

4. See above, pp. 117 ff.

5. See above, pp. 126 ff.

of gamika (village headmen) was hereditary and in addition the gamikas formed a special social group by themselves.¹ Brahmi inscriptions at Situlpavuva mention three brothers who were all gamikas, one of whom also had a son who was a gamika.² Such instances suggest that local administration was left in the hands of a closely knit local nobility. Thus, although the king should have had a choice in selecting his officials, this was limited to a nobility who were socially interrelated.

There is little need to mention the part played by courtiers (amaccas) as a check on royal power. A passage in the Sumangalavilāsinī graphically illustrates this '... as if the council of amaccas were to insult the king, (saying) "Who made you the king? Was it not done by us? When we are not holding the positions of uparāja and senāpati can you remain the king all alone? " , 3

There is reason to believe that local administration was for the most part left completely in the hands of local

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1. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.130 (27),p.131 (29,30),p.132 (61);
CJSG.II.p.125 (519),p.127 (530),p.206 (630),p.226 (752);
CALR.III.p.212 No.11; Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume,
p.61(21),p.64 (1,3)
 2. JCBRAS.NS.II.pp.130-131 (27-30)
 3. Sumangalavilāsinī.p.503

communities. This may be the reason why the chronicles are silent about these. Since the chronicles are mainly concerned with the affairs of kings and monks, had there been a close connexion between the kings and local bodies, reference to the latter would have been made in the chronicles. The Samantapāsādikā bears witness to the independent way in which public business in villages was carried out by the villagers themselves.¹

Various corporations and guilds played a very important role in the life of the community. The chronicles as well as the inscriptions bear witness to the existence of such independent local bodies. Śrenis are mentioned in the Mahāvamsa; the term was used to denote corporations of tradesmen or craftsmen.² The conventional number of such guilds is fixed at eighteen in the Mahāvamsa.³ Another term which was used to denote such corporations is puga or pugiya as found in the early Brahmi inscriptions.⁴ The term denotes a local corporation of a town or village.⁵

1. Samantapāsādikā. pp.1226-1227

2. Mv. 7.57; 19.3; Cf. R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India. pp.2,3,17.

3. Mv. 7.57; Cf. Majumdar, op.cit. p.18

4. JCBRAS.NS.II.p.137 (3); JCBRAS.NS.V.p.140 (3)

5. Majumdar, op.cit. pp.138-139

Indian law books assign wide powers to such independent local authorities. Their rules were considered to be as valid in the eyes of the law as the law made by kings, and their representatives had the right to be consulted by kings in any affair that concerned them.¹ They were invested with the highly important power of making regulations for themselves;² their executive and judicial powers were put on the same level as that of the king.³ The king interfered in their affairs only when it was absolutely necessary. Although the powers of these local corporations as they functioned in Ceylon are not recorded, it is worthwhile to note a casual reference in the Samantapāsādikā which states that when kings entrust gāmas and nigamas to ganas, the latter become the lords of such places.⁴ Hence it is likely that the ganas functioned in Ceylon much as they did in India.

Of all the institutions which prevented the arbitrary exercise of royal power the most important place should be accorded to the Sangha which has been dealt with above.⁵

1. Majumdar, op.cit.p.17

2. Majumdar, op.cit.p.24

3. Majumdar, op.cit.p.25

4. Samantapāsādikā.p.910

5. See above, pp. 190 ff

Thus from ancient times the king was regarded as the supreme source of law and justice and he controlled the judiciary. He exercised a general power over land and, for the protection he afforded, the people paid him a share of the produce. Apart from taxes and tolls the king obtained a considerable income because of the economic activity resulting from irrigation. Before any accepted law of succession was developed the king generally decided his successor on the throne, and, because it was the king who appointed higher dignitaries of state, he wielded substantial control over them. The king could always claim the services of his subjects to meet national dangers or for the works of public welfare but during the period under review the king could not claim the unpaid services of his subjects.

Although the king exercised power in almost every field, in which a ruler can exert authority in society, yet his power was limited by various factors. The absence of a large regular army, the development of the power of the senāpati, popular opinion, traditions of the past, nobility, local self government and the Sangha formed formidable deterrents which prevented the abuse of royal power.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that kingship in Ceylon was not brought from the mainland of India as a full-fledged institution but was a natural development of local leadership in the early colonies of north Indian immigrants. This is not to deny the powerful influence that the subcontinent exerted toward its development, particularly with the ascendancy of imperial Magadha. Nevertheless such influence brought only the outward refinements of kingship adorning the local leadership that had arisen in response to the prevailing conditions in the Island at a time when the settlements began. The introduction of Buddhism and the consequently increased inflow of ideas of monarchy due to the constant relationship between India and Ceylon must certainly have accelerated this development.

Royal titles serve to illustrate the upward trend that was taking place in local leadership; the warrior leader of the early settlements developed into a real king with all the formalities attached to the office. With the passage of time he assumed pretentious titles, discarding earlier ones associated with a humbler era. Before long the kings invested themselves with titles which indicated that they aligned themselves more with gods than with human beings.

Parallel to the emergence of the royal office may be seen the rise of a local élite which formed the main prop of kingship. When kingship was just emerging the difference between royalty and the local nobility was very slight, but no sooner had the warrior leader turned into a full-fledged king than the gap between the two began to widen. This increasing distance between the nobility and the royalty and the glamour with which the latter came to be surrounded must have kindled ambition among the more prominent nobles and it was this which led to the capture of the throne by members of the nobility in the early centuries after Christ.

The expansion of the sphere of royal activity led to the growth of administrative bureaucracy and this development was twofold; on the one hand it resulted in an expansion of both the power and the field of activity of individual offices and on the other hand there was a multiplication of offices in the higher ranks to meet the new demands of intensified royal activity. It was by efficient control of the bureaucracy that the king made his sovereignty felt among his subjects.

A unique institutional development which started about the time of the emergence of the monarchy and contributed greatly to the shaping of the character of kingship in Ceylon was the Buddhist Sangha. The close connection between the king and the Sangha led

to radical changes in the character of kingship. Although India came under the influence of Buddhism for a certain period it failed to prevail over Brahmanic and Hindu concepts of kingship. In Ceylon on the other hand Buddhism prevailed throughout, and although Hindu ideas were felt through Mahāyānism they did not distort the Buddhist concept of kingship.

It was through the Sangha that Buddhism was brought to bear upon kingship. The king received his early education in monasteries and he had a moral obligation towards its members. The Buddhist concept of kingship was a constant deterrent to claims of divine right, the basis of absolute rule. And finally the Sangha stood in the way of the secular authority of the king when it inclined towards tyranny.

Kingship as it functioned in Ceylon, particularly during the period under review, was neither absolute nor despotic. It is true that the king as the supreme ruler did not have to account to any outside authority, but the exercise of royal power was circumvented by various factors. The king was the supreme head of justice but the law stood above him and if he violated the law he invited disaster. He exercised general overlordship over land and claimed a share of its produce, but he could only claim this for the services he rendered, i.e. protection; he could not seize the land of his subjects, who had the right to

enjoy or alienate their land; even the king bought land from his subjects. ^{The king could claim the services of his subjects but} he was called upon to pay for the labour; compulsory service - the rājakāriya of a later date - was totally absent.

Apart from the influence of Buddhism, various other factors militated against the king obtaining absolute power. The lack of a large standing army, and, even when such an army was developed, the parallel growth of the office of senāpati; popular opinion and the way it was manifested against the rulers who transgressed the accepted norm; the existence of a set of norms of conduct for the rulers; a powerful nobility and the existence of local self-governing bodies - all of these were effective checks on royal power. Thus, though it fell short of the ideals of Cakkavatti and Dhammarāja, kingship in ancient Ceylon was surely a far cry from an 'Oriental Despotism'.

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